MEMORANDUM

ON THE

MATERIAL CONDITION OF THE LOWER ORDERS

IN

BENGAL

DURING

THE TEN YEARS from 1881-82 to 1891-92.

BY

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MEMORANDUM ON THE MATERIAL CONDITION OF THE LOWER ORDERS IN BENGAL.

In drawing up this memorandum on the present material condition of the labouring classes of Bengal, I have been guided, as far as possible, by the instructions conveyed in paragraph 4 of Mr. Secretary Muir-Mackenzie's Circular to Local Governments, No. $\frac{43}{465}$, dated the 3rd September 1892. The time allowed me, though it has been extended by the kindness of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, was too short to admit of my furnishing complete information on each of the subjects suggested by the Government of India. To trace the economic progress during ten years of a population of nearly seventy-five millions, inhabiting an area of 187,000 square miles, would demand six months' close application.

Absence of materials.

2. Materials, too, are wanting. The tables summarizing the Census Returns of 1891 are still incomplete; and those which I have received from the Census Commissioner are in some confusion. The analyses of professions and avocations are nearly useless for the purposes of this memorandum. As to the urban population there is very little information of any kind available. Mr H. Lee, Chairman of the Calcutta Corporation, has been unable to give any particulars of the condition of the lower classes in the metropolis: and Mr. G. A. Grierson, Chairman of the Howrah Municipality, has sent an interesting note, drawn up by one of his subordinates, too late to admit of my utilizing it fully. Lastly, the statistics of the vast internal trade of Bengal—a powerful factor in the well-being of the masses—are very imperfect. The Calcutta Customs' report for 1891-92, and those on the River and Rail-borne Traffic for the previous year, throw some light on its volume and direction. Trade on the Nadia rivers and the canals is accurately registered; and figures relating to it are to be found in the Revenue Report of the Public Works Department, Irrigation Branch, for 1890-91. That between Bengal and Assam finds registration at certain stations on the Brahmaputra and Meghna. The enormous volume of traffic on native craft on the Ganges, known in its lower reaches as the Padma, and most of its tributaries, has no record. It is therefore impossible to give a graphic picture of the movement of internal commerce.

Basis of the memorandum.

3. The basis of my work is a series of reports drawn up by Divisional Commissioners and District Officers in 1887-88, when, in pursuance of instructions from the late Viceroy, a confidential enquiry took place as to the material condition of the lower classes throughout the Empire. The Government of India, in a demi-official circular in the Department of Revenue and Agriculture, No. 48Fam., dated the 2nd September 1887, expressed a desire to possess more information on this topic than was then available, "in order that, when occasion arises, material may be provided for dealing effectually with the allegations that are frequently made as to the proverty and want of the lower classes, and which, however true they may be in respect to limited tracts, are, it is believed, not generally applicable." The officers consulted adopted widely different methods of ascertaining facts. Some have palpably failed, because they were of too inquisitorial a character, and raised suspicions which led to evasions and misstatements. In other cases the information supplied by subordinate agents has not been sifted, and very little pains have been taken to get at the truth. The results, such as they are, were ably summarized by Mr. Secretary Nolan's letter No. 87T.R., dated the 30th June 1888, to the Supreme Government; and the conclusions arrived at are to a great extent borne out by my independent enquiries. They have been collated with the Administration Reports of Commissioners for the succeeding years, and those of the various departments of the Local Government. The Sanitary Commissioner for Bengal has kindly furnished me with elaborate statements comparing the mortality from fever, cholera and all causes in 1881 and 1891; and the Meteorological Reporter has supplied a note on the abnormal climatic conditions of the past official year. These materials, imperfect though they are, cast a flood of light on the resources of the agricultural and labouring classes throughout the province.

The Division the unit.

4. I have adopted the Division as a unit because nearly all statistics are grouped around it. Besides, it is not too unwieldy to admit of satisfactory treatment. The average Division consists of 20,770 square miles, with a population of 8,277,000. It is true that when Bengal was parcelled out into these administrative areas small regard was paid to physical peculiarities. Thus, Burdwan includes purely alluvial tracts, such as Hooghly and Howrah, and others on the rock and laterite. So, too, Bhágalpur, which is reckoned a part of Bihar, contains Maldah, a wholly Bengal district, and Purnea, which is virtually one. To construct a more logical scheme and rearrange the statistics in new groups would have required a longer period than that placed at my disposal. And had I done so, the approach to perfect accuracy would have been inconsiderable. There are many districts which offer great diversities of soil and climate. Those of Bengal have been treated in the following order:—

(1) The east, Chittagong and Dacca.
(2) The northern districts, Rajshahi.
(3) The central districts, the Presidency.
(4) The western districts, Burdwan.
(5) Chota Nagpur.
(6) Orissa.
(7) Bihar, Bhagalpur, and Patna.

Statistics of crime not considered.

5. Stress has not been laid on the statistics of crime from year to year as indicating successive phases in national prosperity, because crime in this country is nearly independent of such considerations. Offences against property are, to a very large extent, the work of professional criminals. So all-powerful is custom that a man commits thefts, burglaries, and dacoities, not because he is starving, but because his fathers did so before him. In 1878, 113,621 cases cognizable by the police were reported. Three years later the number fell to 104,153. The figures for 1890 were 117,443, and for 1891, 128,472. The Patna Division is responsible for 4,105 of the 11,029 cases in excess last year; and parts of that tract undoubtedly suffered from scarcity and high prices. But Bhagalpur, where famine indications were even more acute, shows a positive decrease in "cognizable" crime in 1891. Dacca, again, and Burdwan, which were free from scarcity and where the standard of prosperity is undoubtedly higher than it is in Bhagalpur, exhibit an increase in the volume of such offences, nearly proportionate to that of Patna. There is another factor of uncertainty in these statistics. They are supplied by the police, a body notoriously not to be relied on for accurate or conscientious work. A station officer whose superior animadverts on an increase of crime in his jurisdiction will reduce its volume, on paper, by suppressing offences reported to him. This he can do with almost perfect impunity. Much of the apparent increase in 1891 was due to executive orders conceding to the police a greater latitude in dealing with trivial cases. They have no longer the same temptation to conceal crime as they had when every theft or burglary had to be investigated, whether property had been taken or not. Thus the element of error in our statistics of crime is so large as to vitiate any deductions which might be based on them as reflecting fluctuations in prosperity.

Stamp revenue and that from registration disregarded.

6. So, too, with the revenue derived from stamps and the registration of deeds. The former has risen in ten years from Rx. 1,205,928 to Rx. 1,503,304, or twenty-five per cent., but the growth is not necessarily collateral with a growth in wealth. Burdwan, for instance, had the largest development of stamp revenue of any Division, Dacca alone excepted: but it is quite certain that its material progress has not been as great as that of Chittagong, the Presidency, or Orissa. A larger use of court-fee stamps may mean increased spending power, for litigation is a luxury in Bengal, or disturbed relations between landlord and tenant hampering the growth of agricultural wealth. An increase in the revenue from non-judicial stamps may indicate a larger number of transfers or mortgages due to poverty, or a salutary exchange of leases and counterparts. The fluctuations in the number of documents registered are determined by similar accidents: but in cases when they unmistakeably point to agricultural depression they have been duly noticed.

Tabular statements annexed.

7. The memorandum is illustrated by the following tabular statements:—

I. Mileage of roads in Bengal, 1891.
II. Average produce of the principal crops.
III. Average price of food-grains, 1889-92.
IV. Average return per acre in pounds.
V. Incidence of taxation on land.
VI. Incidence of the income-tax.
VII. The extent of cultivation.
VIII. Population, 1881 and 1891.
IX. Schools and scholars, 1881 and 1891.
X. Mortality from fevers, cholera, and all causes, 1881 and 1891.
XI. Incidence of revenue from excise, 1881-82 and 1891-92.

General summary.

8. It only remains to summarize the more obvious conclusions to be derived from the facts before us. There is no scope for theories or controversy, however tempting the opportunity afforded by the mass of facts and figures brought together. Many of these conclusions want the charm of novelty, but all such are of the nature of those truisms which cannot be too often insisted on by economic enquirers.

Influence of climate on national progress.

9. It is easy to exaggerate the influence on the formation of national character exercised by environment. Buckle, *pace tanti viri*, has fallen into this error, and it has robbed his great work of much of its value. But the opposite extreme must be avoided. In Bengal we have every variety of soil and nearly every climate; and the most superficial observer can hardly fail to remark corresponding differences in the people. The eastern districts are of alluvial formation, exposed to the currents of pure air sweeping along the mighty rivers, and free from exhalations producing fever. Hence the people are more hardy and more progressive than elsewhere. The central and northern tracts are of far older date. The soil is saturated with the pollutions of centuries: a change in the direction of drainage has turned its former river beds into a chain of swamps; and as we approach the Himalayas we come under the influence of exhalations from the deadly Terai. The result is a want of vitality in the peasant, a moral and physical sluggishness which reacts on prosperity. Further west we have the laterite and rocky formations which are outlying spurs of the Central Indian plateau. Here the standard of health is higher, and the growth of population is limited only by the sterility of the soil.

10. So, too, with facilities for communication. Eastern Bengal possesses a network of rivers navigable throughout the year, and minor water courses which become so during the rainy months. The same conditions in a slightly less degree are enjoyed by the central and northern districts. They have led to the growth of an enormous inland trade, which indirectly enriches the tiller of the soil. The development of steam navigation on our rivers is one of the most interesting features of the report. It has brought within the influences of civilization huge tracts, which 10 or 15 years back were almost isolated. Chota Nagpur and the parts of Burdwan which are on the laterite enjoy fewer natural advantages and have therefore lagged behind.

Influence of communications. Rivers.

11. Much, however, has been done of late to equalize the conditions of transit. The district and Local Boards, which are the evolution of the system of self-government inaugurated 20 years since, have gradually overspread the province with a network of roads. In 1891 there were 32,579 miles, of which 4,223 miles were metalled, an average of one mile to 6·33 square miles of area. The Patna and Presidency Divisions are best provided with roads; while Dacca and Chota Nagpur are most backward in this respect. The first, however, has great facilities for water carriage, and it is a question whether local bodies in the eastern districts have not devoted too large a portion of their funds to roads, and neglected the improvement of their splendid rivers. In Chota Nagpur and the Sonthal Parganas the construction of "feeder" roads is a work of pressing necessity.

Roads.

12. But it is in railway enterprize that the most substantial progress has been made since 1881. Northern Bihar now joins hands with Assam and with Upper India, and the completion of the erstwhile Tirhut State Railway, now a portion of the Bengal and North-Western System, has done much to relieve this congested tract from the incubus of famine, and to provide a market for its surplus labour. Great extension has been given to the Northern Bengal State Railway, which has opened up wealthy districts formerly cut off from civilization and the currents of traffic. The Bengal-Nagpur line has revolutionized the trade of South Chota Nagpur. When the long contemplated line connecting Chittagong with the Assam valleys, and that skirting the eastern coast of the Peninsula and traversing Orissa, shall have been carried into execution, Bengal will be fairly supplied with trunk railways. It will then remain to pierce densely-peopled producing tracts with light branch railways and "feeder" roads. It is much to be regretted that the resources at the disposal of local authorities should be wholly unequal to the demands which such schemes entail, and that the margin left by the Provincial Contract should be so slender as to preclude the Government assisting them by the grant of loans.

Railways.

13. Nor should canals be underrated as means of communication. Those in South Bihar have preserved that tract from the horrors of famine. The Orissa system, in spite of its excessive cost, and hampered as is the administration by the incompleteness of its distributaries, renders a repetition of the events of 1866 impossible. The Midnapore canals, the Nadia rivers and those which traverse the Sundarbans, all carry an immense traffic and play an important part in the commerce of Bengal.

Canals.

14. That commerce has shown a constant development. The foreign trade of Calcutta has risen in five years from Rx. 70,809,612 to Rx. 80,102,433. Exclusive of that carried on in coasting vessels, the figures were Rx. 60,327,380 and Rx. 67,570,890. It is a significant fact that the "balance of trade" has always been in favour of this country. The excess of exports over imports since 1887-88 has been, in round figures, Rx. 65,000,000. The trade of Chittagong has declined temporarily, owing to a falling-off in the production of the great Eastern Bengal staple, jute. That of the Orissa ports, Cuttack, Balasore and Puri, is thriving, and the statistics for 1891-92 show an improvement of 23 per cent. as compared with those of the preceding year. The imports by sea at all ports of the Bengal Presidency, exclusive of Government stores, were Rx. 30,095,142 in 1887-88 and Rx. 34,324,785 in 1891-92. They rise and fall in alternate years; those for last year having been 4·3 per cent. below the figures for 1890-91. A decline in the imports of cotton piece-goods took place which must in part be ascribed to the effect of scarcity, but also in large measure to the violent oscillations of exchange which have grievously hampered the import trade. The movement in metals, kerosine-oil, machinery, and lucifer and safety matches, has been very considerable during the decade: a fact which reflects the increased prosperity of the consumers. It would undoubtedly have been more steadily progressive had the gold value of the rupee remained tolerably constant. Under present conditions all commerce with western countries is little else than gambling. It is impossible to predict rupee rates with any certainty: and so narrow is the margin of possible profit left by modern competition, that a fluctuation of one-sixteenth or even one-thirty second is a matter of serious concern.

Foreign Commerce, Calcutta.

Chittagong and Orissa ports.

Imports.

15. The imports of salt were considerably less in 1891-92 than in the preceding year, but the decline is due solely to an alteration in the mechanism of trade, which renders it useless to maintain the immense stocks once the rule. The consumption of salt per head of the population in 1881-82 was 9lb 8oz., and the incidence of duty per head 6 annas 5 pie. The corresponding figures for 1890-91 were 10lb 8oz. 5dwt. and 8 annas 5 pie per head. The revenue rose in 1891-92 by 2·5 per cent., and stood at Rx. 2,250,000, a little under 8 annas per head. The decreased incidence is, however, nominal, for it is due to the use of the Census figures for 1891 as a basis for computation. They are 7·9 per cent. in excess

The salt tax.

of those on which the incidence for 1890-91 was reckoned. The revenue from salt would have been more considerable but for the illicit practices known to prevail in the saliferous tracts, which are fostered by the defective state of the law. At the same time it must be admitted that the taxation of this necessary of life is defensible only on the grounds of imperative fiscal necessity, and that the revenue which it yields is gained at the expense of the public health. A free use of salt is specially necessary in the case of dwellers in countries where swamps abound: and the low vitality which is increasingly seen in the Bengali peasant is in great measure due to this impost. It has made the Lower Provinces the *nidus* of cholera. Milk is the most potent vehicle of infection, and cattle habitually satisfy their cravings for saline matter by devouring fœces, which are often infected. It cramps the development of fish-salting. In the rainy season every creek, river and pool is alive with fish, and if cheap salt were available they would be preserved in immense quantities and be a most valuable addition to the people's food.

Exports.

16. The exports by sea for Bengal have risen in five years from Rx. 45,966,893 to Rx. 50,649,256. The most interesting feature is the very considerable increase in the movement in wheat and rice, in spite of high prices. The value of raw and manufactured jute shipped in 1891-92 was Rx. 9,361,500, and as Bengal is the sole field of supply, these figures have a special significance. They are exclusive of the value of immense quantities used in packing country produce exported. The total production of the fabric now averages a million tons, worth in its raw state Rx. 17,000,000. It pours a flood of wealth into Central and East Bengal; but at the same time jute is a highly speculative crop, and immense losses were made in 1890-91 by over production.

General effect of foreign trade.

17. It would be difficult to over-rate the influence for good on the material condition of the peasant exercised by the vast and ever-growing volume of foreign trade. Every district has a surplus of agricultural produce to dispose of in exchange for luxuries, and, in many cases, the necessaries of life. Thanks to improved communications, the telegraph, and the craft and enterprise of the ubiquitous Marwari, who plays in Bengal the part which Jews filled in Europe during the middle ages, a rapid exchange of products is carried on and the volume of external commerce is fed and stimulated.

Income-tax.

18. The income-tax intercepts but a fractional portion of its legitimate share in the profits thus amassed. The demand for 1891-92 was Rx. 368,339: the number of assessees 103,176, or one in 853 of the population. The average amount levied in each case was Rs. 28-8 only. The congestion of wealth and industry in the metropolis is evidenced by the fact that nearly half the total produce of this tax is payable by residents within its limits.

Rainfall and seasons.

19. The course of trade in an agricultural community is largely determined by the harvests, which in their turn vary with the amount and distribution of the rainfall. It has been wholly abnormal during the past three years, and that of 1891 is thus described by the Meteorological Reporter: "In the first four months it was more abundant than usual. It was unusually light and very defective throughout the whole of the monsoon season, while the cold-weather rains did not appear at all at the end of the year. Hence, as the main amount of rainfall comes in the monsoon months, the general rainfall of the year was also rather largely in defect of the normal, the defect for the year exceeding 20 per cent. in North Bengal and North Bihar, being 10 per cent. and upwards in defect in Chota Nagpur, while on the other hand in Orissa the fall was 12 per cent. in excess of the normal of the year." Thus while there was very considerable excess at a period when it was of little benefit to crops, on the other hand, during the season when rain was most required for the great winter rice then coming into ear, it was in some parts entirely absent, and everywhere much below the average.

Harvests since 1889-90.

20. Hence a partial failure of the crops. The rice on which five-eighths of the population depend for subsistence, did not return more than 62·5 hundredths of an average outturn. Northern Bengal and Bihar suffered most: and, but for the protection afforded by the Sone Canals, South Bihar would have been brought within the grasp of famine. The scarcity which ensued was accentuated in the north and east by the small extent of stocks, due to the neglect of rice cultivation in favour of jute in 1890-91. Orissa and Chôta Nagpur suffered least, for the climatic conditions prevalent there differ widely from those of the rest of the province And as 1891 was one of three successive years of poor harvests, the state of affairs was to the full as ominous as that with which 1874 opened. The advance made since that year in communications, in trade and in canal irrigation, and the increased staying power and foresight of the people, prevented history repeating itself by the record of a famine on a scale equal to that which imposed so grievous a financial burden on the empire in 1874.

Famine relief.

Indications of distress, indeed, were not wanting; but they were detected and acted upon promptly by the vigilance of Government. The chain broke at its weakest links. In parts of North Bengal, Bhagalpur and North Bihar it was found necessary to open works and organise gratuitous relief during the first quarter of 1892. But the pressure was nowhere acute, and it was soon relieved by a timely rainfall.

Prices.

21. The cultivator, indeed, found some compensation for the inferior outturn of his food-crops in the higher range of prices which they attained. The rise since 1889-90 is at least 15 per cent. Nothing affords so convincing a proof of the solidarity of modern Bengal than the uniform range

of prices in distant parts of the province. In the era when steam communications were unknown and roads in embryo, rice often sold fifty and even a hundred per cent. dearer in one district than in another 100 miles away, The cultivator no longer fears the famines and the hardly less disastrous gluts which afflicted his father:

22. The effect on agricultural prosperity of taxation on land is on the whole unimportant. When the Permanent Settlement was carried into execution, nearly a century back, little was known of the real assets of the zamindar. Corruption was rife amongst the subaltern servants of Government. Portions of Bengal and Bihar, which are now the most productive, were almost trackless jungle. Hence the proportion derived by the State from the profits of the farmer is almost insignificant. The local demand in respect of land revenue and cesses in 1891-92 was Rx. 4,594,142, or 9 annas 9 pie per head of the population, and 8 annas 9 pie per acre of area. The demand is heaviest in Burdwan, where there is reason to believe that it appreciably adds to the raiyats' burdens; and lowest in Chota Nagpur. It is probably less than a fifth of the zamindars' profit from land throughout the province. It is this class which has reaped the benefit of the ignorance and optimism of Cornwallis and his advisers. With few exceptions they have done nothing to justify the expectations formed in 1793. A large proportion are absentees, seduced from the duty of residing on their estates by the increasing attractions of Calcutta and the large towns: and their affairs are left in the hands of agents who are generally venal and are oppressive when they dare to be so. In the eastern districts the peasantry have some spirit and have sturdily declined to part with the lion's share of the wealth derived from new staples. They take their stand on the raiyats' Magna Charta, the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885, and refuse to be coerced into parting with their precious heritage of fixity of rent and tenure. A spirit of unrest and sullen discontent is abroad. The Magistrates of the two largest districts, Backergunge and Mymensingh, do not hesitate to aver that quiet cannot be hoped for till a survey and record of rights has been carried into effect throughout their turbulent charges. In North Bihar matters are still worse. The growing density of the population has brought about competition rates of rent: and every form of harassment known to greedy and corrupt agents is rife. The cadastral survey, that necessary complement of the Tenancy Act, has now commenced; and it will relieve the cultivator from the incubus of insecure tenure.

Land Revenue.

23. The Census of 1891, imperfect as is still the process of compilation, casts a vivid light on the course of material progress. The population resident in British territory has risen from 66,691,456 in 1881 to 71,346,987, an increase of 4,655,531, or 7·9 per cent. In other words, the Lower Provinces add to their numbers in ten years a quota equal to the population of the Greater London of the Registrar-General. The ratio of growth varies, of course, widely. The largest is shown by the east, with its many natural advantages. Chittagong increased by 17·2 per cent., and still has but 345 inhabitants to the square mile. Next in order comes Dacca, with an increment of 13·1 per cent and 654 to the square mile. Some of its districts show a considerable density, the number per square mile in Dacca being 865, and in Faridpur 793. Chota Nagpur exhibits an increase of 9·6 per cent. In spite of the comparative poverty of the soil, there is ample elbow-room with a density of only 171 to the square mile. Orissa, under the influence of comparatively good harvests and infinitely better markets, has extended her numbers by 8·4 per cent., and the density is still only 410. Eastern Bihar (Bhagalpur) has a growth of 6·4 and a proportion of population to area of 418. West Bihar (Patna) is next in order with a percentage of increase of 4·9 and a density of 667. The pressure of population on the soil is enormous in parts of this division, but its effect is not to be judged solely by figures. Saran has 950 persons to the square mile, but it has splendid communications and a laborious peasantry. It is therefore better off than Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga with 902 and 840 persons to the square mile. South Bihar has a fine system of canals and is not so much tied down to its soil as the northern half of the division; the pressure of population is less and the standard of comfort superior. The Presidency, Burdwan and Rajshahi Divisions, in other words Central, Western and Northern Bengal, show the lowest rate of increase. The first includes Calcutta, with its myriad resources; but with a density of 767 there is not room for a considerable increase. Two districts, Nadia and Jessore, show a positive decline in numbers. Burdwan includes the suburban district of Howrah with 1,515 to the square mile, and Hooghly with 880, both alluvial tracts of great fertility and close to the best market in India. The other districts of this division have a far lower density, but as a large portion of their area is on rock and laterite, they are by no means so prosperous. Rajshahi has increased more slowly than any other division, and its density is only 462. Here again we are confronted in the case of two districts with a decline in numbers. They are Rajshahi and Rangpur.

Fluctuations of population since 1881.

24. Is the disproportionate growth of population in different parts of the province connected with their relative salubrity, or is that check, enunciated by Malthus as "moral restraint," in operation in the thickly peopled tracts? The problem is one of the deepest interest: but with the materials before us it is impossible to offer more than a reasonable guess at its solution. The mechanism for registering deaths is still very imperfect; through great strides have been made in this respect since 1881, when registration was little better than a farce. The statistics of mortality must be regarded rather as a means of comparing the healthiness of each division than as representing actual death-rates. 1891, too, was an exceptionally unhealthy year. The long drought impaired an already defective water supply, and brought a large increase in fevers and cholera. The latter disease raged as an epidemic in North Bengal, and was

Public health.

carried in all directions by hordes of pilgrims who visited the sacred rivers on the occasion of a great bathing festival. The following table will, however, give some data for an estimate of the influence of health on the growth of population :—

Name of Division.	Density per square mile.	Percentage of increase, 1891.	Rate per mille of mortality from	
			Fever.	All causes.
1. Rajshahi	462	3·7	27·38	35·44
2. Presidency	707	4·0	26·12	33·80
3. Bhagalpur	418	6·4	22·02	29·25
4. Burdwan	551	3·9	18·19	26·81
5. Orissa	410	8·4	9·92	24·29
6. Patna	667	4·9	16·28	24 25
7. Chota Nagpur	171	4·6	15·93	23·01
8. Dacca	604	13·1	14·75	22·06
9. Chittagong	345	17·2	5·92	20·36
Total for Bengal ...	487	7·9	18·94	26·94

It will be observed that Northern and Central Bengal is the most unhealthy portion of the Lower Provinces; a fact due to the operation of great natural phenomena, assisted by the utter disregard for the commonest sanitary rules exhibited by the people. Here, too, the growth of population is the smallest. Bhagalpur, or East Bihar, is next in order, because its eastern districts, Malda and Purnea, have all the characteristics of North Bengal, including its high death-rate. Burdwan was the cradle of a peculiar type of malarious fever, which broke out there a quarter of a century back and has slowly spread throughout the delta. There is every reason to believe that, like cholera, it is carried by an infected water-supply, the result of obstructed sub-soil drainage. Orissa is peculiarly liable to epidemics owing to the enormous influx of pilgrims to the shrine of Jagarnath. 1891 was remarkably free from cholera here: but on the other hand small-pox is always rife, for the crassly-conservative Uriya entertains a rooted objection to vaccination. Patna is rapidly losing its repute for salubrity. The drainage of the country on the south of the Ganges is obstructed by canals, and to them must be attributed a large increase in "wet" cultivation which is notoriously a cause of malaria. The north, too, where population is thickest, is also growing in unhealthiness. There is every reason to suspect under-registration in Saran, which shows a death-rate from fever of only 10·00 per mille. Were that corrected, the mortality from that cause would probably be but little below the provincial average. The east, which is the least unhealthy, shows the largest increase of population. These imperfect data would inspire a belief that the second of Malthus's checks on redundant population, pestilence, has come into play. A Magistrate-Collector of experience opines that the increased prosperity of his district, which is an alluvial one in Burdwan, is due to the diminished pressure of population on land, and the disappearance of the "weaklings." It is possible that moral restraint, bred of the painful acquisition of a higher standard of comfort from which the peasant is unwilling to derogate, may also be a factor in the low ratio of increase. This sentiment, if it exists at all, does so in the teeth of the strongest religious and social sanctions inculcating the duty of early marriage and the begetting of children. Great attention has been paid of late years to public health; and efforts have been made to overcome the *vis inertiæ* encountered in all classes where sanitation is concerned. The Sanitary Commissioner has developed into a Board with skilled advisers, empowered to aid local authorities in schemes of water-supply and drainage. But until selfishness and superstition shall have yielded to a higher sense of duty to the community we shall be working in a vicious circle. That which John Stuart Mill said of modern machinery in his celebrated chapter on the "Probable Future of the Working Classes" applies in full force to sanitation in Bengal as it is. It will only permit a larger number of human beings to live in a more miserable manner.

Education.

25. Relief must not be looked for in literary education: for the very classes which have drunk most deeply at the well of knowledge show the smallest regard for prudence. It must be admitted, however, that the decade has been one of considerable progress in an educational point of view. In 1881, Bengal had 44,113 schools, one in 6·31 square miles of area, and 845,998 pupils, one to 11·6 boys of a school-going age. In 1891, these numbers had grown to 59,618 and 1,360,558; giving a ratio of one school to 3·87 square miles, and a scholar to 5·5 boys capable of receiving instruction. The largest actual growth has been in primary institutions; but high schools, teaching the University course, show a very large increase. This is not wholly a matter for congratulation: for it is yearly becoming more apparent that the supply of lads with a smattering of English is larger than the learned professions, commerce, and the public offices can absorb. Yearly swells the residuum whose hopes of a career are blighted by the fierce competition. Hence the deep discontent that permeates a section of the community,

insignificant, indeed, in point of numbers, but able to make its voice heard in the Press and to influence public opinion at home. Distress, says Johnson, is weak and flexible while there remains any prospect of relief: but when no succour appears, it is fearless and stubborn. Angry alike with those who injure and those who do not help: careless to please where nothing can be gained, and fearless to offend where there is nothing further to be dreaded. The brightest feature in the decade's educational history is the spread of female instruction. There were 15,163 girls at school in 1881 and 47,166 ten years later. However small these numbers may seem, when compared with the 8,000,000 girls of school-going age, no one who knows the ingrained dislike for this movement evinced by the upper classes a few years back will be inclined to question its significance. A beginning has been made by Government to graft technical on literary instruction: the Sibpur Technical College near Calcutta has been given an extended sphere of usefulness: and great improvements have been made in the mechanism of another institution at Patna, the capital of Bihar. Several District Boards have been led to open technical schools at their head-quarters, and it is hoped that the reproach which clings to this Province of being the most backward in India as regards the useful and ornamental arts may speedily be removed.

General prosperity of different divisions compared. The peasant.

26. How vain and foolish is the cry so often raised by a small clique which claims to speak for those whom they never tire of styling the "dumb millions" will be apparent in every page of this memorandum. We see the eastern districts and Orissa enjoying a degree of comfort and well-being to which it would be difficult to find a parallel in the civilized world, and owing their happiness solely to British rule. The people of the central and western districts of Bengal are less thriving; because their vitality has been impaired by vast changes in the face of nature and their own apathy in matters affecting health. But here there is nothing approaching distress. All classes are well fed and indulge in a display of clothing and jewellery which their fathers never dreamed of. In Chota Nagpur the standard of prosperity is greatly increasing, and in spite of infertile soil, the danger of famine is remote. It is in Bihar alone that we encounter anything like destitution in a large class. In parts of Monghyr, Bhagalpur, and Purnea, and to a greater extent in Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga and the east and west extremities of South Bihar, the margin between subsistence and famine is perilously small. The main cause at work is the appalling congestion of population, and the attachment, hitherto found almost inconquerable, of the peasant for his native soil. It has been found that a holding of five acres is enough to provide an average family of as many souls with every reasonable comfort, and that a fair living may be made in ordinary years from one of three acres. When the little farm is below that minimum, and rents are on a competitive basis, some pressure is felt even in prosperous years, and the peasant is in no condition to stand the stress of bad seasons.

The day-labourer.

27. He has, however, the resource of working as a day-labourer for more prosperous neighbours. Contrary to general impression, the class of agricultural labourers is a comparatively small one, and its services are in great request. An improvement has been effected in their condition of late years by the spread of railways. The command thus given of markets for their thews and sinews has rendered them more prosperous and more independent, and is rapidly obliterating a species of serfdom into which they had sunk. In most parts of the lower provinces, the labourer, whether landless or not, lives nearly as well as the middle class agriculturist. He is generally paid on a grain-basis, and has been less affected by the dearness of provisions than the artizan.

The artizan.

28. The latter, however, has shared in the general growth of prosperity. Wages, where paid in money, have not responded to the rise in the price of food; for custom is too ingrained to admit of rapid economic changes. The ownership of land is very common in this class, and in such case the artizan sublets on a system akin to the French *metayage*, and thus obtains grain enough for seven or eight months' consumption. The growth of organized industry has exercised a powerful influence on the artizans' well-being. Here the prospect is full of encouragement. The banks of the noble Hooghly are lined for miles with jute, cotton and paper mills, the fruits of British enterprize; and the suburban tract contains countless minor factories, many under native management. Here high wages may be earned without excessive labour, as the very large remittances sent by Bihari operatives to their friends by money-order testify. The jute trade deals with a million tons of the lucrative staple annually. In 1891-92, manufactured jute to the value of Rx. 2,500,000 was shipped to Europe, and an immense but unrecorded quantity was used to pack grain and oilseeds for export. Some industries for which Bengal was once famous are hastening to decay. The manufactures of silk are slowly perishing under the stress of competition and a change in public taste. That of indigo is declining in Bengal proper, owing to altered agricultural conditions. The hand-loom weavers are giving up the struggle for existence with Manchester and German machinery. But there has been rather a redistribution than a destruction of wealth. The manufactures of Bengal are more valuable than they were in days when her silks and muslins held every market of Europe.

The urban population.

29. The stimulus of developing industries has created a high standard of prosperity in the larger towns; but it cannot be said that the urban population of Bengal is important. There are 34 towns of more than 20,000 inhabitants, and the total of dwellers in areas with a municipal constitution is 3,443,876 or 4·8 per cent. of the population of British Bengal. Most of them are not towns at all in the English acceptance of the word. They are congeries of villages divided by stretches of open country, and owe their importance solely to the fact that they are administrative head-quarters of districts and sub-divisions. The modern tendency to aggregation is not visible in

his province. The commerce and manufactures of Calcutta and Howrah give employment to all who are willing to work. Dacca finds compensation for the decline of her beautiful textile manufactures in the rise of jute. Save in the case of a very small class, the remote descendants of English ancestors, there is no actual want. The fierce struggle for existence to be observed in European cities is unknown; and the "sweater" has not made his appearance.

Beggars.

30. Those who live by charity are probably 1½ per cent. of the population: about 1,100,000 in all. They are either religious mendicants, who batten on the superstition of their fellows; or those who are utterly friendless, and are unable by reason of age or disease to earn a living. The latter find ample support in ordinary times in the boundless charity which characterizes all classes. In Central Bengal, however, they are beginning to feel the stress of high prices. Charity is the first luxury of which men deprive themselves when their spending power is curtailed.

Emigration.

31. Organised emigration is still in its infancy. The Indo-Aryan is firmly rooted to his home, and the standard of living is still too high in Bengal Proper to render the prospect of expatriation tempting. In the hilly and laterite tracts, where there is a strong aboriginal element, the love of home is not so strong. Chota Nagpur and the Sonthal Parganas furnish the largest contingent of emigrants. The stream flowing towards the tea districts of Assam is computed at 30,000 annually. That towards the British colonies is wholly insignificant. Two systems of recruitment are at work. In the first, the registration of intending emigrants is compulsory, and they are watched over and protected at every stage of their transit towards the colonies or Assam. In return they bind themselves to serve for a term of years. The other method is known as "free emigration." Recruiters must have a license signed by the Protector of Emigrants and countersigned by the head of the district in which they operate, but coolies thus engaged are not registered or bound to the soil. Free emigration is by far the most popular method. It is not unattended by abuses, but no pains have been spared to stamp them out, without checking the healthy flow of surplus population from congested districts. A large colony of Sonthals has been planted under the guidance of a missionary, assisted by the State, in the Assam Duars, and another flourishes in a jungle-grown tract of North Bengal. In 1888 negotiations were opened with the authorities of Burma, in view of planting Bihari settlers in the waste lands of that Province. A mass of information was collected as to its climate, products, and rates of rent, and these particulars have been published by means of leaflets in the vernacular circulated in the congested portion of Bihar and in Chota Nagpur. Every effort has been made to promote this movement. So lately as November last, the Director of Agriculture, heading a commission representing the mercantile interests concerned, travelled through Bihar and consulted the district officers and leading zamindars as to the best means of diverting towards Burma the exodus of labourers which annually takes place to North and East Bengal for harvesting and work on the roads. Several grants of fertile waste have been made by the Government of Burma to capitalists willing to introduce immigrants. One of these has been taken up by a firm of European zamindars and manufacturers in south Bihar, to whose enterprize Indian agriculture is under the deepest obligations. These gentlemen have planted a colony of settlers from their Indian estates on a block of splendid land 108 miles from Rangoon, and are most sanguine of its ultimate success. But the task of redistributing the population of India is beyond the scope of the functions of Government. The masses to be dealt with are too large and the ignorance and prejudice to be combated too dense to allow us to hope for success. Besides, action in this direction would at best be a palliative; the void created would speedily be filled up by an ever-increasing population.

Excise.

32. That which I may call voluntary taxation—the revenue from excise—is mainly contributed by the lowest classes. The Muhammadans of Bengal, who numbered in 1891, 23,437,501, have abjured strong drinks and restricted their expenditure in drugs. This "temperance movement" is due to a wave of Puritanism which has swept over the Province under the exhortations of teachers from Upper India and Arabia, attracted to the once-neglected east by the growth of railways. The tenets of Hinduism are equally opposed to the use of intoxicants. Hence the excise revenue, an unfailing test in Europe of national prosperity or the reverse, is not so in this country. The incidence in Bengal is only three annas per head of the population, and the growth since 1881, 18 per cent. In deference to public opinion in England, restrictions have been imposed on the manufacture and vend of spirits, and the increase in receipts from this source is absolutely insignificant. The largest growth is shown by opium and *ganja*, or Indian hemp. The abuse of intoxicants in this country has no appreciable influence on rural or industrial well-being, and the necessity of further repressive action is not apparent.

Conclusion.

33. He who surveys the Lower Provinces as a whole must find it impossible to avoid the conclusion that the lower orders enjoy a high and ever-increasing standard of prosperity. The rate of progress in so large an area must necessarily be unequal. It is probable that twenty per cent. of the 15,811,000 inhabitants of the Patna Division are insufficiently fed. Limited tracts in the Bhagalpur and Burdwan Divisions are, owing to various causes, a subject of some anxiety in times of poor harvests and high prices. But the peasant, the artizan and the labourer throughout the country are infinitely better off than their predecessors of a generation back. Evidence of this fact meet the eye on every side in the shape of better houses, food and dress, a more liberal expenditure on ornaments, brass eating vessels and luxuries. Indebtedness is nearly universal, but it is the outcome of a rude system of insurance against famine, as well as of extravagant expenditure in social ceremonies. It is rather a sign of credit, and therefore the possession of resources than of actual want. Realized wealth is growing. The deposits in Post

Office Saving Banks have risen from Rx. 111,156 in 1882-83 to Rx. 1,671,502 at the close of last year: and this in spite of restrictions placed on the maximum amount to the credit of a depositor.

The English masses and those of Bengal compared.

34. A few words, in conclusion, on the much-vexed question of the relative condition of the lower orders in England and Bengal. Nature has done far more for these tropical regions than she has done for us. The land yields her increase twice, and even thrice a year, with the merest scratching, and without the use of costly manures by the cultivators. If the Bengali suffers severely from malaria, due at least as much to his own negligence as to causes beyond his control, he is free from the awful suffering which racks the ill-nourished frame of his English brother during the long cruel winters of the north. His wants are few and easily satisfied. The enervating climate in which he exists, his religion and his social surroundings, tend to destroy that ambition to rise which is the bane of placid happiness as well as the mainspring of modern civilization. Judged from their own standpoint, the peasantry of Bengal are happy and prosperous.

I.—EASTERN BENGAL.

The Chittagong Division.

Geographical.

35. The Chittagong Division lies at the eastern extremity of the province, stretching from the estuary of the river Meghna and the Bay of Bengal, to the mountains of Burma, and northwards to the Lushai watershed, which feeds the rivers of the Silhet and Kachar valleys. It includes the three permanently-settled districts of Tippera, Noakhali, and Chittagong, with a highland region known as the Chittagong Hill tracts, extending over 5,419 square miles with a census population of 107,286. To the north is the native state of Hill Tippera with 4,086 square miles and 137,442 inhabitants. The Division, if these areas be excluded, contains 6,699 square miles and a population enumerated in the Census of 1891 of 4,082,795 or 609 to the square mile. The northern portion is constantly gaining in area and fertility, by the silt brought down by the mighty Meghna; while the south has an outlet for its products in a sea-port possessing many advantages over Calcutta. The position of Chittagong, between sea and mountain, ensures a heavy and regular rainfall, and guarantees it against those recurring famines to which less favoured tracts are subject. Internal communications are secured during the rainy season by a network of rivers and water courses. In the dry months a system of roads, which is mostly the work of the last twenty years, gives tolerable facilities for traffic. At the close of 1890-91, the Division possessed 11 miles of metalled and 1,311 miles of unmetalled roads, a total of 1,322, or one mile of road to 9·16 square miles of area. The result of the development of communications has been a large increase in the number of carts. The railway has not yet penetrated the Division, which is cut off from Bengal by sea and river; but surveys have long since been completed for a line connecting Chittagong with the Assam valley. The realization of this project would give an immense impetus to local trade; and Assam, to which this tract belongs geographically, would benefit in a still greater ratio. Much has been done of recent years to improve communications by steamer. The most northerly district, Tippera, is now in direct connection with the daily service between the Goalundo terminus of the Eastern Bengal State Railway and Assam. A steamer subsidized by the District Board plies between Chandpur, a port on the Meghna, and the large inland mart of Hajiganj. The Bengal Central Flotilla Company has established a service between Noakhali, the central district of the Division, and the head-quarters of the neighbouring district of Backergunge, which is itself connected by steamer with Khulna, the terminus of the eastern section of the State Railway. Thus vast tracts, which ten years back were wholly isolated, are now in touch with the centres of human intercourse. The external trade of the Division is largely conducted through Chittagong, which was visited in 1891-92 by 77 ocean vessels with a gross burden of 87,000 tons. Trade with Indian ports was maintained by the steamers of the British India Steam Navigation Company, and a vast fleet of native craft with a tonnage of 142,555. The total imports were Rx. 1,058,000, and the exports Rx. 1,306,700. The year, however, was far from bearing a representative character, for owing to causes of a temporary nature, there was a heavy shrinkage in the trade of this port. The exports were rice to the extent of 30,500 tons, hides valued at Rx. 25,000, and upwards of a million pounds of tea, the produce of gardens near the head-quarters. A large increase in the movement of these goods took place, due, it is believed, to the stimulus of low exchange. Jute, on the other hand, showed a drop from 51,000 tons in 1890-91 to 34,600 in the following year, due in great measure to overproduction in the season of 1890. The northern districts produce some of the finest jute which leaves Bengal for Calcutta or Aberdeen, and the cultivation of this lucrative staple has nearly doubled during the last decade. The principal articles of import were, salt, 7,335 tons, kerosine-oil 883,000 gallons, cotton-twist and cloth, Rx. 150,000. A decline in the import of salt to the extent of 12,000 tons took place. This fact, which at first blush might be taken to indicate a lower standard of agricultural prosperity, is due to a silent revolution in process of being effected in the import trade of salt. The larger use of the canal route, and the introduction of a vastly improved method of conducting weighments, have rendered the maintenance of heavy stocks unnecessary. Hence those held at the close of 1891 were thrown on the market, which was consequently glutted. The imports of kerosine, which is rapidly supplanting

Communications.

Trade.

the vegetable oils, as a illuminant throughout Bengal, declined by nearly 6 per cent. This is also attributed to a rate of exchange unfavourable to importers; but European piece and other cotton goods show an increase of 10 per cent., and such variations are doubtless connected with gluts or depletion of stocks. The external trade of the Division, though subject to the ordinary fluctuations, is in a thoroughly healthy condition; and the outlet thus afforded for the surplus products of the soil is of immense benefit to the cultivator.

Crops.

It reflects, to some extent, the produce of the harvests. With few exceptions, they have been rather above the average during the decade. The northernmost district, Tippera, suffered from inundation in 1885 and 1886, but it has long since regained its high normal prosperity: and no other natural calamity has occurred to affect the harvests. The year 1891-92 was less favourable than any of its predecessors. Taking 100 as representing a full average crop, rice gave only 69, jute 56, sugarcane 84, oilseeds 75, and pulses 62. These poor results have lowered the three years' average; but the Division still stands better as regards harvests since 1889-90 than any other portion of the province. The figure for winter rice on this basis is 88, for sugarcane 81, jute 69, pulses 69, and other cold-weather crops 94. The

Prices.

inferior harvests of last year, coupled with large demands for export, have conspired to raise the price of food-grains. Wheat, which sold at 26 lbs. per rupee in 1889, rose to 19 lbs. in 1891-92. Rice rose from 32 to 24 lbs., and pulses from 23 to 20 lbs. With the sole exception of jute, the cultivation of which is as speculative as that of hops in England, all agricultural products show a corresponding rise in price. While the farmer has found compensation for poor harvest results in a rise of more than 20 per cent. in prices, and the agricultural labourer, who is paid in grain, is unaffected by the upward movement, there can be no doubt that the small class with fixed incomes, and the still smaller class of artizans possessing no interest in land, have been sufferers.

36. The spread of cultivation has been encouraged by the lightness of fiscal pressure.

Land revenue.

At the era of the Permanent Settlement, this division was one dense forest, broken only by patches of cultivation surrounding thinly scattered villages. It was an Alsatia for broken men from all parts of the eastern world; and its maze of creeks and water-courses were the haunt of dacoits and river-pirates. Hence the Division escaped with an assessment to land revenue which bore a very small proportion to its magnificent resources. The gross demand in 1891-92 in respect of revenue and cesses was Rx. 314,374: equivalent to 12 annas 5 pies per head of the population, and to 11 annas 8 pie per acre of area. The income-tax is also levied with extreme indulgence and fails to intercept more than a fraction of its proper share of the profits from trade. The total demand in 1891-92 was Rx. 9,116, payable by 5,129 assessees, one in 816 of the population. The incidence per

Relation between landlord and tenant.

land was only Rs. 17-12-4. Nor do rack-renting or insecurity of tenure prevent the steady growth of prosperity. The Division, as a whole, is a land of peasant proprietors. There are no fewer than 134,808 estates and tenures on the rent-roll; one to every 58 acres of area. The proprietors of the few great estates are absentees, and their local agents are unable to coerce the sturdy peasantry. Rents are, indeed, rather high; for nine rupees per acre is demanded for first class rice or jute-producing land; but such is the fertility of the soil that this relatively heavy payment represents barely a tithe of the gross produce.

37. With so many natural advantages, the population of Chittagong is increasing in

Census results.

a greater ratio than that of any other division. From 3,569,071 in 1881 it increased to 4,190,081 in 1891, an increase of 621,010, or 17·2 per cent. Noakhali, with its fertile soil and splendid water communications, shows the highest rate of increase. Tippera, already very thickly peopled, is less progressive in the matter of population; and Chittagong, less fertile than either district named, showed the lowest rate, if we except the savage Hill Tracts, which are nearly stationary.

38. This rapid growth is in some measure due to the superior healthiness of the

Public health.

eastern districts. It is not that malarious fever is absent, but that it is as yet far less destructive than in more thickly-peopled tracts. The death-rate from this cause in 1891 was 15·92 per mille as compared with 18·94 for the whole of Bengal. Cholera, though it was unusually prevalent in 1891, caused a mortality of only 1·22 per mille—hardly a third of that of the entire province. Tippera, the northern district, in spite of its denser population, is far the healthiest, showing a fever death-rate of 12·60 only, but it has not the drawback of the proximity of vast swamps, covered periodically by the tide, and left for hours daily to fester in a burning sun and exhale a deadly miasma.

39. An attempt was made in 1888 to gauge the prosperity of the lowest classes

Material condition of the landed classes.

throughout Bengal. Selected villages in each district were critically examined, and investigations, which in many cases defeated their object by their inquisitorial character, were made as to the income and expenditure of the agricultural and industrial sections. In Chittagong these enquiries showed that rather more than half the population was wholly dependent on the land. The average strength of a family of cultivators was 5·4 persons; the average holding 3·3 acres. Three acres of this would ordinarily be under rice, and the remainder cultivated for jute. A large proportion, if not on too low a level and

subject to inundation, would be sown again in the cold-weather with mustard, sesamun, chillies, vegetables, and other crops known under the generic name of *rabi*. Often too, about 3 acres would be devoted to sugarcane, a very lucrative crop. The gross proceeds of such a farm in good years are worth Rs. 150-8; the net profits Rs. 116-11-5, or Rs. 21-9-9 per head. Next in order is a class estimated to amount to 20 per cent. of the population, which eke out the profits of cultivation by labouring in the field for richer neighbours. The number in family is 4·8, the area cultivated ·83 acre. The gross profits derived from farming by this hybrid class are Rs. 46-13-4, and the net profits available for maintenance Rs. 38-6-1. But the additional earnings of a family of this class average Rs. 75-0-4 annually, for the daily wages of an adult labourer in this Division range between 3 annas 3 pie in Noakhalí and 5 annas 3 pie in Chittagong, with an average of 4 annas 6 pie. The rate for boys between 10 and 15 is half the latter sum. This brings up the total family income to Rs. 113-6-5, or Rs. 23-9-11 per head. The prosperity of this class is nearly on a par with that of the farmers pure and simple, but for eight months in the year they are compelled to buy rice, their staff of life, and therefore feel the pressure of high prices. Landless labourers are not commonly met with. The last Census shows 71,357 persons of this category in Chittagong—barely 1·8 per cent. of the population. Their earnings average Rs. 75-12 per family of four, or about Rs. 18-12 per head. This class cannot always find work, and are the least prosperous section of the community. It must not be supposed that any one who will do a fair day's work in these districts is ill-nourished. The food of the agriculturist consists of three good meals of rice seasoned with vegetable curry. The poorer men substitute chillies for curry at one of their meals, and all have the advantage of fish to be had in abundance in the nearest swamp. The homestead patch gives vegetables and curry-stuff as well as coarse fruit and fuel. His dwelling consists of two or three huts in an enclosure jealously guarded from the prying eye by a wall of bamboo-matting, and buried in a belt of trees. His building materials are thatching-grass, bamboos and jungle-wood, brought from the hill territory and Hill Tippera by the younger men who visit these wild tracts in the slack season. The interior of these dwellings would seem bare and poverty-stricken to the European eye, for the only furniture is a few mats, baskets and stools, made of that most useful of vegetable products, the bamboo. His household vessels comprise three or four pots of various sizes, an assortment of platters and cups, all of brass or gunmetal, and worth Rs. 12 collectively. The dress of a substantial raiyat consists of a cotton sheet wrapped round the upper part of his person, a waist-cloth, skull-cap, and leather shoes. Muhammadans prefer a close fitting tunic extending below the knees. The females are clad in a narrow cotton sheet wound round the person, and covering, when necessary, the head and face. The materials in most cases are European piece-goods. The well-to-do raiyat loves to load his womenfolk with ornaments. An average outfit consists of a pair of bracelets, another of anklets, a necklace, and a waist chain; all of silver, and earrings and a nose-ring of the more precious metal. The whole would cost Rs. 60. Nor is a display of trinkets the only evidence of solid prosperity in the cultivating class. All make use of cotton umbrellas imported from England. No one allows the females of his family to engage in field labour, and a plurality of wives, that infallible test of prosperity in a Muhammadan community, is very commonly met with.

II.—Landless classes.

Industries.

40. Eastern Bengal has but few manufactures, and her rise from utter barbarism is too recent to admit of any advance having been made in the useful arts. Chittagong had once a very important industry in ship-building. In the 16th and 17th centuries the gallies of the Sultan of Turkey were constructed here or in the neighbouring islands. So lately as the beginning of this century vessels of 800 and even 1,000 tons were launched from her yards. This manufacture has dwindled down to a mere nothing. Only eight sea-going sloops and brigs were built last year. The manufacture of tea is stationary and now barely exceeds a million and a quarter pounds. Bamboo mats, often beautifully fine, brass vessels, and coarse cloth, make up the list of local industries. Artizans are few in number and highly remunerated. The daily wage of masons is 8 annas to Re. 1; of carpenters 8 annas to 12 annas; of blacksmiths 6 annas to 12 annas; of thatchers 5 annas to 8 annas. A rise of ten to fifteen per cent. has occurred in Tippera in the last three years, probably in response to the increasing dearness of provisions. Most of the men, too, are land-owners in a small scale. They do not themselves cultivate, but sublet to others on a system akin to the French *metayage*, by which the lessee pays half the gross profits. The average holding of an artizan is 1·21 acres: his profits therefrom Rs. 18-8-0. If tolerably skilful, the earnings from his craft will amount to Rs 229-9-3, making a total income of Rs. 244-1-3, or Rs. 46-5-9 per head in a family slightly exceeding five on an average. This class includes persons pursuing the avocation of sailor and fireman on seagoing vessels; for such are very largely manned by lascars hailing from the Chittagong Division. It supplies mahouts, too, to the greater part of Bengal. The artizan class in a wider acceptance is estimated to number ten per cent. of the population. The landless section is about a third of the whole. As it includes only the less skilful—for earth-hunger is as fierce here as on the continent of Europe—the average earnings of its members are only Rs. 60 or Rs. 13-5-0 per head of a family of 4·5. Their living is somewhat precarious, for they are not constantly employed; and they pay more dearly for food than their landed colleagues. One class, however, and one alone, are on the verge of misery. This is the weavers. Many thousands have given up the hopeless struggle with steam machinery and have taken to agriculture, but

Artizans.

the majority still cling to the ancestral craft, and make coarse but durable cotton cloth with thread reeled in European mills. The landless merchant or professional man are never met with outside the towns: and form in the aggregate but ·5 per cent. of the population. Their average income is Rs. 30: Rs. 6 per head, in a family of five. At the opposite pole of the social scale come the menial sections, such as the drummers, answering to our bellmen of old times, and also employed as musicians at social ceremonies. They earn Rs. 46 annually per family of 4·9, and are often put to straits in times of high prices. Their numbers are comparatively large, being estimated at 6 per cent. of the population. Last, but not always lowest in the social scale, come the beggars.

Beggars.

They include religious mendicants of both creeds, as well as friendless widows, lepers, the blind, halt and maimed. In ordinary times they live very comfortably; but they are the first to feel the pinch of scarcity.

41. The structure of society is too simple to admit of the growth of towns. There are only three in the Division with more than 10,000 inhabitants, and the largest, Chittagong, has but 24,069. As might be expected in such an emporium of trade, its population has increased largely since 1881.

Urban population.

42. The expenditure on intoxicants is a measure of national prosperity at home. Here it affords no test whatever; 2,914,650 out of a total population of 4,190,801 are Muhammadans, and they are almost to a man Ferazis, a sect as sour and straitlaced as our Puritans. They set their faces against spirituous drinks: and are divided in opinion as to the value of opium and ganja. These opinions influence the development of the excise revenue, which has also been reduced by wholesome restriction imposed four years ago in the vend of spirits. The total produce to the State from the sale of exciseable articles was in 1881-82 Rx. 21,305, and in 1891-92 Rx. 25,579; giving the absolutely insignificant incidence of one anna per head of the population.

Excise.

43. Mental culture lags far behind material progress in this Division; though great progress has been made of late years in bringing education to every man's door. In 1881-82 there were but 3,961 schools of all grades with 69,810 scholars, including 2,161 girls. Ten years later the number of schools had risen to 7,460, and of pupils to 155,661, of whom 8,634 were girls. There is now a school to 1·62 square miles of area; and half the boys of a school-going age are under instruction. This state of things compares most favourably with conditions prevalent in any other division of Bengal. With so high a standard of prosperity, the need for emigration has not yet arisen. Numbers of small farmers from Chittagong visit Arakan every year at harvest-time, tempted by the enormous labour-rates current in Burma. On the other hand the termination of each rainy season sees an influx of coolies from the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, eager to find work during the cold-weather in the fields, on roads, or as palanquin-bearers.

Education.

Emigration.

44. This survey of the far east would be incomplete without some reference to the Hill Tracts. They are inhabited by eight tribes of Chákmas, Tipperas, and others, partly immigrants from Arakan, speaking the ancient dialect of that province and following the Buddhist religion, and partly aboriginal hillmen. They are divided into many classes, each acknowledging the supremacy of a chief, whose powers, however, are strictly defined and exercised under the control of the British officials. The fiscal organization is simplicity itself, and the system of Government is patriarchal. The method of cultivation is only suited to a sparsely populated country. It is termed *jhuming*. The hillmen burn patches of scrub and forest annually, make holes in the ash-strewn soil with a pointed stick, and insert the seeds of half a dozen different grains and vegetables. In this manner they raise large quantities of Indian-corn, rice, and cotton, the production of the latter crop alone averaging 1,350 tons. They are, however, entirely devoid of thrift. Their surplus rice is devoted to the brewing of a species of beer to which they are immoderately addicted. They are also confirmed gamblers, and lose in a night the gain from a year's labour. But fish and edible forest produce abound, and so easy are the conditions of life that real poverty is unknown amongst them.

Native States. Hill Tracts.

45. The people of Hill Tippera are a timid and primitive race, deeply attached to their Maharaja. His yoke presses lightly on them, and their material condition, as well as that of the numerous immigrants into this State from Bengal, is at least as satisfactory as that of our own subjects in the neighbouring districts.

Hill Tippera.

II.—EASTERN BENGAL.

The Dacca Division.

46. The Dacca Division, which marches with that of Chittagong on the west, strongly resembles its neighbour in most essentials of rural economy. It consists of the four permanently settled districts of Dacca, Mymensingh, Backergunge and Faridpur, with an area of 15,045 square miles, and a census population of 9,844,127, or 654 to the square mile. It occupies the embouchure of the Meghna, with its countless tributaries, and of the Ganges, known in its lower reaches as the Padma, and is a perfect maze of water-courses, most of which are navigable throughout the year by boats of 10 to 25 tons. The steamers of two Inland Navigation Companies now ply daily on the Brahmaputra, and

Geography.

Communications.

Meghna, and connect the northern portion of the Division with Goalando, the terminus of the Eastern section of the Eastern Bengal State Railway. Backergunge has now been placed in touch with our railway system, by a line of steamers uniting it to Khulna, another terminus of the same line. An extension of this railway has been constructed during the decade, 86 miles in length, between Narainganj, the port of the divisional head-quarters, and the capital of the great district of Mymensingh. With roads Dacca is poorly provided, but its splendid water carriage renders its need in this direction less pressing. The total length in 1890-91 was 1,057 miles, 170 of them metalled, giving one mile of road to 14·25 square miles of area. The river traffic of this Division is enormous.

Trade.

The steamers plying on the Brahmaputra and Meghna carried 526,000 tons of goods in 1890-91, valued at Rx. 8,360,000. Goods were conveyed during that year by country boats to a weight of 274,000 tons and a value of Rx. 1,710,000. About sixty per cent. of these represented exports from and imports into the Dacca Division. Amongst the former are jute and rice, which are the staple products of the east. The first is baled at Narainganj and sent to Calcutta for export to Europe, or manufactured in the mills that line the Hooghly. The second is despatched mostly to Assam, which cannot feed its population, but in 1891-92 a large export to Chittagong by country boat took place. The outturn of both rice and jute was poor during that year, and trade consequently declined. A corresponding drop is observable in imports. Cotton, kerosine oil, and timber, declined considerably. Such fluctuations, however, attend the course of trade throughout the world. That of Dacca has progressed greatly during the period under review, and is doubtless destined to develop still more rapidly under the influence of improved communications.

47. The comparative slackness of trade is the result of a succession of inferior harvests, itself due to abnormal rainfall. That of 1891-92 was both scanty and irregular in its incidence; and for three years past things have been nearly as bad. Taking 100 as representing an average crop, we get the following figures for the principal harvests since 1889-90 :—Early rice 73, winter rice 79, sugarcane 68, jute 68, pulses 56, and cold-weather crops—chillies, oil-seeds, turmeric and the like—62. Jute, one of the two pillars of Eastern Bengal agriculture, was sown on a much smaller area than in 1890-91, when the extremely high prices of the preceding year tempted the raiyat to speculate in this lucrative but risky crop beyond his means. It suffered from too heavy a rainfall at sowing time and a long drought at a later stage of growth. Backergunge and Faridpur are little else than vast rice fields; and this crop too was seriously affected by a rainless autumn. Its growth was stunted; and though stocks sufficed for home requirements, comparatively little was left for export. Only 14,000 tons were sent from Backergunge to other districts: while in 1890-91, itself a year of poor harvests, the export was 17,400 tons. But crop results are not the only factor in determining the price of food. There can be no doubt that the over-production of jute in 1890-91, which led to a serious drop in the price of that commodity, also had the effect of restricting the area devoted to rice. Throughout North and East Bengal there has been a tendency of late years to sacrifice "the staff of life" to more lucrative crops. Districts which used to feed themselves must now import: stocks are short, and normal prices of grain very high. This evil, for such it is, will right itself; but the standard of intelligence in rural Bengal is low, and all changes operate slowly. Wheat is not consumed to any extent in this division; and, as it is one of the greatest producing tracts, the price of rice is still lower than in any other part of Bengal except Orissa. It sold in 1889-90 at 28 lbs. per rupee, and the average in 1891-92 was the same. Pulses have fallen from 26 to 30 lbs.

Crops.

Prices.

48. Like Chittagong, Dacca may almost be said to be a creation of British rule. The capital was indeed a seat of Provincial administration under the Moghul, and was early noted for its costly and delicate cotton wares. The Division, however, was little else than a series of swamps and jungles, fringed towards the Bay of Bengal by an intricate network of creeks and islands, the haunt of the tiger and river-dacoits. Its miserable inhabitants were periodically harried by bands of Portuguese and Magh marauders, who burned and looted the villages and carried off the girls for sale or slaves. The early British official found the country one-half jungle and the other half inhabited only by outcasts from more settled communities. The decennial settlement of the land became permanent too soon after the consolidation of our authority. The fruits of peace and good government had hardly begun to make themselves conspicuous. Hence Dacca is to this day very lightly assessed; and the incidence of taxation on land is very much less than in Divisions with fewer resources. The total demand in respect to revenue and cesses is Rx. 439,199, or 7·3 per head and 7·7 per acre. Small properties abound. There are 56,243 estates other than those belonging to the Government on the rent-roll, giving an average area of 170 acres. The majority of the larger landlords are absentees, and leave the management of their estates to agents. Attempts made from time to time to intercept a portion of the raiyats' profits from valuable staples by enhancing current rates of rent have given rise to combinations formed for the purpose of withholding all payments. Hence a perpetual friction between landlord and tenant, culminating in outbursts of serious agrarian crime. The two largest districts, Backergunge with 3,649 square miles, and Mymensingh with 6,332, have attained a special notoriety in this respect. Cases of rioting have increased in a single year by forty per cent in the former and no less than sixty-two per cent. in the case of the latter district. The Magistrate of Backergunge

Land revenue.

Landlord and tenant.

who has had a long and intimate experience of his turbulent charge, opines that no repressive measures will avail unless they are preceded by a settlement of the whole district. In other words, a cadastral survey and record of rights is essential in the interests of public peace. The Magistrate of Mymensingh records a very similar state of things. Where tranquillity prevails in that huge district, it is because the village Hampdens have been warred down at enormous cost, and the mass of tenants have been cowed into temporary submission. But it is not the quiet of contentment. It is rather the stillness that presages a storm. These commotions, however, may be accepted as indicating high prosperity: for that which is worth having is alone persistently striven for. There are so many factors working for improvement in the Dacca Division, that its population shows a substantial increase since 1881. In that year, the numbers enumerated were 8,700,939, in 1891 9,844,127, an increase of 1,143,188; no less than 13·1 per cent. The detailed statements compiled up to date, showing the avocations of the people, offer no trustworthy information as to the numbers engaged in agriculture or supported by the profits from land. It may, however, be safely affirmed that eighty-five per cent. are in those categories. In spite of the high population rate, 865 per square mile in Dacca, 793 in Faridpur, 590 in Backergunge, and 548 in Mymensingh, there is still an abundance of fairly good land available. Of a total area of 9,627,520 acres, 3,845,122 are still uncultivated. The extent occupied by rivers and water courses is unusually large in this Division, and an allowance of twenty per cent. must be made in this respect, as well as to cover sites of roads and villages. A further deduction of ten per cent. in respect of irreclaimable swamps should be conceded. The net balance is 2,691,592 acres. Thus though the pressure on land is greater than in Chittagong, there is a margin which would allow for an increase of population at the present ratio for twenty years. The average raiyat's holding in Dacca is nine acres, which give him, in ordinary years, 84 cwt., or 9,400lb, of cleaned rice. Families of cultivators of this class in Dacca average eight members, and each consumes 1·5lb of rice per diem. Retaining therefore for home consumption 4,380lb, the family has 5,020lb; worth Rs. 179, available for sale or exchange for other necessaries. It has also the profits from straw, estimated at Rs. 18, and from ·66 acre under jute, Rs. 72. Thus the annual surplus of such a family would be Rs. 269. Rents average Rs. 5 per acre, and Rs. 2 will cover the cost of extraneous labour at ploughing and harvest time. Deducting Rs. 7 per acre, or Rs. 63 for 9 acres, in respect of cost of cultivation, we have a balance of Rs. 203. Salt at 12lb per head per annum will cost Rs. 11, clothes at an average of Rs. 3, Rs. 24. Oil, fish, repairs to houses and social ceremonies will stand the family in Rs. 60. Thus the surplus which might be saved or invested in land will amount to Rs. 108. Unhappily thrift is the last passion which dominates the Dacca peasant's breast. His earnings are dissipated in social observances such as weddings and funeral rites, or flung into that bottomless gulf, a law suit. One who knows him well says that the raiyat who at harvest time with his valuable crop around him will scarcely wet his feet even to go to the fields to look after the reapers, will by the sowing season be ready to borrow money at cent. per cent. The homestead of the Dacca raiyat is embowered in bamboo clumps and tree jungle which furnish him with firewood and building materials. It includes a patch of a rood or so, which gives him tobacco, spices, and coarse vegetables. In Muhammadan villages goats and fowls swarm and cost nothing for their keep. Evidences of prosperity are seen everywhere, except in the central part of the Faridpur district, where huge swamps restrict the cultivable area. Owing to improved facilities for export, and the growing value of jute, the standard of comfort in the cultivating class has distinctly advanced during the decade. The raiyat wears better clothes and shoes than his father, eats more abundantly, and sleeps on a more luxurious bed. His cottage is brightly and cheaply lit by a rude kerosine lamp. He kindles his fire with Swedish safety-matches which have driven the English product from the market. When ill, he calls in a doctor, and uses quinine and other costly drugs. In the north he is far too independent to sell his milk or poultry.

The Census results.

Waste land.

Rural well-being.

Landless Classes.

49. If the condition of the cultivator in the Dacca Division is an enviable one, hardly less so is that of the landless labourer and of the artizan class. The last Census returns show only 66,995 persons as belonging to this class. Their wages are four annas to six annas a day without food, and Rs. 3 to Rs. 4 per mensem with one substantial meal daily. Labour at harvest time is compensated by an allowance of one-fifth of the crop. Society is too modern in these parts to admit of a high development of arts and manufactures. Indigo was once made on a large scale in the south; but it is on the wane, and the early extinction of this once lucrative industry is expected. Oil and flour-mills worked by steam have been started in Backergunge and Dacca. The divisional capital was once famous for its muslins, the manufacture of which, owing to the hereditary skill of spinners and weavers and favourable climatic conditions, had attained a degree of perfection seen in no other quarter of the world. The demand for these exquisite wares has long been on the wane, and the art is nearly extinct. Cheeses and metal-ware were also turned out in larger quantities ten years ago than at present, for the cheapness of transport gives advantages to the poorer and more laborious workmen of less favoured parts.

Manufactures.

50. Artizans in Dacca are well off: too well off, in fact, to admit of their gaining in skill. Masons earn 7 annas to 12 annas per diem, carpenters 6 annas to 12 annas, blacksmiths 8 annas to 1 rupee, thatchers 5 annas 6 pies to 8 annas. With few exceptions, they have small farms, from 5 to 3 acres in area, which they sublet, receiving half the annual profits. This arrangement supplies the rice and pulse required for home use for the greater part of the year. Gold and silversmiths are yearly in greater request, but potters are not so well off as formerly, owing to the greater preference yearly shown for brass and bell-metal cooking and eating vessels. The weavers, who in the last generation were the most numerous class of craftsmen, are taking to cultivation, unable to earn a living at the handloom.

Artizans.

51. The classes who live by begging are about 2 per cent. of the population. They are either religious mendicants or aged widows, lepers and blind persons. The first section includes Muhammadan fakirs and Hindu votaries of the mystic cult of Vishnu. Females predominate in the ranks of the *Vaisnavas*, generally aged and battered prostitutes. They often amass great wealth by levying contributions from the faithful, and enrich their spiritual guides at their death. The beggars unable to work are a very small section, for family ties are so strong that relatives, however remote, deem it a sacred duty to maintain their poor dependents. It is only the absolutely friendless who appeal, and never in vain, to the charity of the village community.

Beggars.

52. The urban population of the Dacca Division offers no social problems of interest. There are only 12 towns with more than 10,000 inhabitants, and the urban population is 322,546. Most of the towns so called are mere aggregations of villages, with large tracts of open country interspersed. They cluster round the head-quarters of districts and sub-divisions, and are peopled by officers and hangers-on of the courts of law. Dacca contains 82,321 inhabitants, and has increased by 3,245 during the decade. After a long period of decay it has found in the jute trade a substitute for its ancient mainstay, the manufacture of silks and muslins. Naraingani, now connected with Dacca by rail, is the centre of the jute-baling industry. Its population in 1881 was 12,508, and in 1891, 17,715, an increase of 5,207, or nearly 42 per cent.

Urban areas.

53. The one class which has not shared to the full in the tide of prosperity is the sons of families belonging to the priestly and literate castes. They are very numerous in this Division, and generally have a minute share in a landed estate, on which it would be impossible to support life. Hence they throng our high schools, and gain a smattering of English, in the hope, which is generally deceived, of obtaining some Governmental post. It is an extraordinary fact that the number of high schools teaching up to the University Entrance standard has risen in the Dacca Division from 20 in 1881-82 with 5,791 pupils, to 42 with 10,379 pupils in 1891-92. In other words, 2,500 lads are yearly turned out with just enough education to render them useless for any profession but that of ministerial service. The numbers who leave the middle English schools with an education still more rudimentary, but ambitions quite as high, are not less than 3,500 annually, a total of candidates for employment of at least 6,000, while vacancies do not reach a tithe of that number. This process is at work in the central and western districts and in Western Bihar; and its outcome is a yearly swelling class of hungry malcontents. Their disappointed hopes find an echo in the utterances of the native press and of the professional agitators who are constantly representing the richest and happiest peasantry in the world as a down trodden and starving people. Popular education has not developed in the same ratio as that mistermed "high." In 1881-82 the Dacca Division had 5,791 schools of all grades, one to 2·59 square miles of area, attended by 149,561 pupils, one to six boys of a school-going age. In 1891-92 there were 8,525 schools with 218,710 scholars, or one school to 1·76 square miles of area; and one scholar to four boys of a school-going age. The number of girls attending school has almost trebled, and is now 10,401. The Dacca Division stands high in facilities for education; though the progress made during the decennial period has not been by any means so great as that of Chittagong.

The middle class.

Education.

54. The excise revenue reflects the condition of the great cultivating and labouring class even less than in the latter Division. The re-introduction of that which is known as the sadar distillery system, which provides for the payment of duty only on liquor passed out for consumption, has checked the vend of spirits in urban areas, and the sale of imported stuff under the names of rum and brandy has further depressed the popularity of the home-made article. It is not pleasant to find these noxious products sold in 1891-92 in the ratio of two gallons to one disposed of in 1881-82, while the revenue from the innocuous *tari*, the fermented juice of the date-palm, has declined from Rs. 1,483 to Rs. 309. As the whole excise revenue is only Rx 81,912 or 1 anna 3 pie per head of the population, it is evident that consumers are but a mere fraction of the total inhabitants. Ferazi-ism is as rampant as in the extreme east; and its fulminations against the use of intoxicants are as strictly obeyed by the vast Muhammadan population.

Excise.

III.—NORTHERN BENGAL.

The Rajshahi Division.

55. To the west of the Dacca Division is that of Rajshahi, comprising the northern districts of Rangpur, Bogra, Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Pabna, Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling. It extends over 17,351 square miles, and

Geography.

had a population at the last census of 8,019,187, giving a density of 462 to the square mile. It almost surrounds the Native State of Kuch Bihar with 1,307 square miles and 578,868 inhabitants. This vast and fertile tract lies between the Ganges and the Himalayan range; four-fifths of its area belonging to the deltaic formation. The eastern boundary is the Brahmaputra, called in its lower reaches the Daukoba; and on the west it marches with Purnea and Malda, districts belonging to Bihar. The Division is seamed by countless rivers, which drain the vast watershed to the north, and pay tribute to the Ganges as it rolls oceanwards. Amongst them are the Harasagar, Mahananda, Dharla, Tista, and Atrai, all of which would rank in most countries as of the first class, and are navigable by native craft of 15 to 40 tons. The Eastern Bengal State Railway bisects the Division and connects the Ganges with the Himalayan Terai at Siliguri, whence a marvellous little mountain line runs up to Darjeeling, the summer retreat of the Bengal Government and an important centre of the tea industry. East and west stretch the branches bringing Bengal in touch with the confines of Assam, at Jatrapur, and with Bihar at Katihar. The total length of the railways is 412 miles, or one mile to 42 square miles of area. The Assam-Bihar extension has been completed during the decade; but owing to defects in construction it has not yet been fully utilized. It runs at right angles to the watershed, and the very heavy rainfall of the north demands outlets through the line on a scale which has not yet been attempted. Hence frequent interruptions to traffic, which also suffers severely from the absence of a tunnel under the Ganges, locally called the Padma, on the main line. Great progress has been made of recent years in improving communications by road; and no less than Rx. 44,059 were spent in 1891-92 in construction and repairs by the several District Boards. The total length of road under their care at the close of the preceding year was 4,847 miles, 204 of them metalled, giving a proportion of one mile to 3·58 square miles of area. Much, however, remains to do in the direction of opening out the country by "feeders" to the lines of rail; and in bridging the rivers and water-courses, which now offer serious obstacles to the development of internal traffic. Fifteen years ago, Northern Bengal was cut off from civilizing influences; and it is mainly to the railway that it owes the progress made in that interval. The mainstay of its trade is its system of rivers.

Communication.

Trade.

The Brahmaputra is traversed by daily steamers connecting Bengal with Assam. The Ganges has a steam service between the head-quarters of the Rajshahi district and Goalundo, the river terminus of the Eastern Bengal State Railway; and Pabna is united with that line by a steam ferry. During the three years ending with 1890-91 the steamers of the State Railway carried 74,000 tons of goods annually to and from Sirajganj, an important mart and centre of the jute industry, on the Brahmaputra. The imports and exports on the Brahmaputra and Meghna belonging to Northern Bengal averaged 335,000 tons in weight and Rx. 340,000 in value. Rice was once the staple product of this region; but of late years it has given way to jute, and the area cultivated has been restricted to an extent which has sensibly affected prices. This fact and the partial failure of the crop in 1891-92 account for a marked decline in the exports of rice; but the Division ordinarily exports 2,600 tons of this commodity. No less than 265,000 tons of jute were carried by river steamer in 1891-92 from the districts of North Bengal; besides a vast amount which escapes registration, carried by country boat. The downward movement of jute by rail is 19,151 tons, and but for the paucity of rolling-stock and the numerous breaks on the lines of rail, caused by unbridged rivers, it is tolerably certain that exports by this means would have been twice as large. Gunny-bags and gunny-cloth to serve as sacking for country produce, were exported to a weight of 11,100 tons in 1891-92. The export of tea from the Darjeeling district and the Terai, as the berm of the Himalayan slope is called, were 33,156,960lb in that year, a considerable advance on the figures of 1890-91. Tobacco is another very valuable crop. Its cultivation on a commercial scale is restricted to a tract on the north-east of the Rangpur district, blessed with a fertile soil and an abundant rainfall. The area under cultivation is 70,000 acres, and the annual export is 19,300 tons. Almost the entire crop is bought up by brokers from Burma and Southern India; and it reappears in the form of those cigars, which are now so universally appreciated under different names. The trade in hides is in the hands of a clique of Muhammadan merchants of Dacca, and the exports in 1891-92 amounted to 1,412 tons. Wheat, oilseeds, and pulses are sent to Calcutta in considerable bulk from the southern parts of this Division. Raw sugar is manufactured in vast quantities everywhere, under the stimulus of a cheap and handy roller-mill originally invented by Messrs. Burrows, Thomson and Mylne, of Bihia in Bihar. The Division contains the only tract in upper India wherein the world-famous Indian hemp, known as *ganja*, may legally be grown. The annual export is about 560,000lb, and it would be many times larger but for the heavy excise duty levied on this dangerous intoxicant. Indigo was once a product of the first rank in these parts: but its manufacture has been for many years on the decline. The exports in 1891-92 were 1,721cwt. Silk is another decaying industry, but it is still exported to the extent of 551,040lb. Among the imports, that of European piece-goods offer the surest indication of prosperity. We find in 1891-92 a large increase in the imports of every district which has furnished returns. Pabna with a census population of 1,362,392 took Rx. 200,000 worth of piece-goods in that year, an increase of 14 per cent. as compared with the imports of 1890-91. The former figure would give an average expenditure of Re. 1-7-0 per head, and show that nine-tenths of the inhabitants are clothed with the produce of English and German looms. The imports in 1891-92 were Rx. 62,000 tons, and nearly every district shows a marked advance on previous years. Kerosine oil, umbrellas, safety-matches, and cheap fancy articles of European make are yearly in greater demand. Judged by its vast trade the Rajshahi

Division stands out as exceptionally thriving. The fact is the more remarkable, in that these districts have passed through the same cycle of inferior harvests as their eastern neighbours. In no part of the Division did the rainfall of 1891-92 approach the average; and in places the deficiency was as much as a third. The winter rice, which is by far the most important cereal, gave but 55, assuming 100 to represent an average crop. The average for three years was 75. Jute gave 60, with a three years' average of 81. The vicissitudes of this highly speculative crop during the last few years need a few words of explanation, for they exercised a considerable effect on the fortunes of the peasantry. 1889-90 was a year of poor outturn, hardly better than 1891-92. The result was that prices rose fabulously, and those who had stocks made fortunes. This state of things tempted the raiyat to embark to the utmost extent of his means in the cultivation of jute. North Bengal was little else than a vast plantation of this staple in 1890-91. The crop was a bumper one, and prices fell to a point considerably below the cost of production. The jute, in fact, was allowed to rot, and was ploughed into the soil in many parts. But the loss of his time and money was not the only evil which the raiyat's greed entailed. The area which should have been devoted to the growth of paddy was seriously curtailed. Stocks of the staff of life were reduced below a safe minimum; and great distress to the landless classes has resulted. Pulses grown in the cold weather on lands from which other crops have already been taken give in figures, 72, tobacco 68, and sugarcane 69, on an average of three years.

Crops.

56. Cultivators have found some recompense for reduced production in the very high range which prices have attained. The following figures, representing the number of pounds of the staple food crops purchasable for a rupee during the last three years, are highly significant:—Wheat 1889-90, 29; 1890-91, 27; 1891-92, 23. Rice 32, 32, 24. Pulse 28, 30, 28. The dearness of rice, which is the food of all classes here, is a fact of serious import to the landless and those who draw a fixed income from land.

Prices.

57. It cannot be said that imperial or provincial taxation press at all heavily on the landed class. At the date of the Permanent Settlement, and indeed for many years later, the northern portion of the Division was overgrown with forests, but the central and southern tracts, which are of older alluvial formation than Eastern Bengal, were fairly cultivated. The Rajshahi district was then an emporium of the silk trade, and lucrative mulberry plantations covered a large proportion of its area. Owing, however, to the ignorance of the English officials and the venality of inferior agents, many vast estates escaped with assessments which are hardly more than nominal. And Northern Bengal was at that era a land of large proprietors. About a third of its area belonged to a single family, that of Nator, which still exists, a shadow of its former self. Many of the most valuable existing estates were carved out of the Nator zamindari in past years by dishonest retainers. A fourth of the Rangpur district belongs to the descendant of Warren Hastings' native factotum, the notorious "Kanto Babu." This absence of peasant proprietors is in marked contrast to the state of things in the eastern districts, and it has had great influence on the social economy of the Division. There are but 22,279 estates and tenures on our rolls, one to nearly 500 acres of area. The gross amount of revenue and cesses of the Division in 1891-92 was Rx. 594,507, or 11 annas 9 pie per head of the population, and 8 annas 9 pie per acre of the area. But the actual tillers of the soil have gained but little by the light incidence of taxation. Many of the estates are so vast and so scattered that the best management possible could not avail to prevent abuses. Northern Bengal, however, is unhealthy and dull; and the increasing social attractions of Calcutta, as well as its accessibility from nearly every part of the Division, have raised up a large class of absentees. Business is left in the hands of agents, who are generally corrupt and oppressive. While the zamindars have generally failed in their efforts to intercept any considerable share of the profits from new staples, they have rarely shown mercy to the raiyats in times of stress. Enormous tracts in Rangpur, Dinajpur, and Bogra have relapsed into jungle, depopulated by epidemics. Of the 11,117,440 acres comprising the Division, 7,030,560 acres are cultivated and 4,086,880 waste. Hence the incalculable benefit of the Tenancy Act, incomplete as it admittedly is without a survey and record of rights. It has inspired the raiyat with a new-born sense of right, and steeled him to resist oppression. It has also operated as a preventive of serious friction. Those who foretold so confidently that this great measure would let loose a flood of litigation had little knowledge of the manner in which such enactments work in Bengal. By rendering it easy for the raiyat to prove his right of occupancy it has put a stop to far more harassing and expensive litigation. Being in accord with the traditional rights of both parties, the effect of the Act has been strictly conservative, tending to allay, not to excite misunderstandings. With this experience it is not a little strange that we should find the same stock objection taken to the cadastral survey. The relations of landlord and tenant are tolerably peaceful in Northern Bengal; for, owing partly to the wholesome check of the Tenancy Act, and partly to the abundance of cultivable land, it is the tenants who are masters of the situation. But for the malpractices of agents, the general aspect of affairs connected with land would be satisfactory. Pabna, however, like its neighbour in the Dacca Division, Mymensingh, has long been notorious for agrarian disturbances. There we still find on the side of the zamindar a tendency to resort to old-fashioned methods of coercion by bands of hired clubmen, and on that of the raiyats an eagerness to combine for the purpose of withholding just demands.

Land revenue.

Landlord and tenant.

58. The income-tax affords no criterion of the wealth and commerce of Northern Bengal, for many of the principal tax-payers reside beyond its limits and are assessed elsewhere. The annual demand

Income-tax.

in this respect is Rx. 29,075, payable by 12,472 persons, giving an average incidence per assessee of Rs. 23-5, and one assessee to 645 of the population. This tax is extensively evaded by merchants throughout Bengal, and indeed the only class which it effectually reaches is that of Government servants, from whose salaries the amount payable is deducted before payment.

Census results, 1891.

Enough has been written to make it clear that the vigorous growth of population, exhibited by the eastern districts, is not to be expected in the older and more sluggish north. The Census of 1891 showed the total number of inhabitants to be 8,019,187, an increase of 285,412 since 1881, or 37 per cent. Two districts, Rajshahi and Rangpur, show a positive decrease, the one losing 17,835 on a population of 1,331,171, and the other 32,500 out of 2,079,964. The other districts show substantial increases, especially the small mountain tract Darjeeling, which showed the phenomenal growth of 43 per cent. The decline in the former districts is in some measure due to a terrible epidemic of cholera, the outcome of a great bathing festival which occurred, after a long interval, in February 1891. Vast numbers of low-caste Hindus from the north of the Division, who had been suspected by their co-religionists of an aboriginal taint, availed themselves of this opportunity to assert their right to inclusion within the Aryan pale. The rush to the Ganges, Hooghly and Bhagirathi rivers was prodigious, and the pilgrims drank in the infection of cholera with the sacred waters. Then the railway service broke down, and the privations endured *en route* increased the travellers' liability to disease. Forty-four thousand nine hundred and forty-one deaths from cholera were recorded, giving a rate per mille for this disease of 5·10 : but the actual mortality was certainly far greater. Fever, too, was even more prevalent than usual, a fact which is always observed in years of scanty rainfall. Northern Bengal can never be otherwise than unhealthy. The miasma from the deadly Terai overspreads it ; and the rivers are perpetually changing their channels, leaving a chain of swamps in the track of their ancient beds. Rennell's well-known atlas shows that the Tista, 120 years ago, flowed fifty miles west of its present course. The habits of the people are such that no natural surroundings would avail to prevent disease. They drink water from wells polluted by sewage filtration. They exclude the circulation of fresh air in their homesteads by belts of trees and tall crops. Thus the entire population is affected with diseases of the spleen and liver, which produce an anæmic condition and lower vitality. The recorded death-rate from all causes in 1891 was 35·44 ; and, owing to defective registration, it is certainly much understated.

Public health.

59. It is pleasant to turn from the indifference thus shown for the commonest rules governing health to the development given in ten years to popular education. In 1881-82 there were 2,122 schools in Northern Bengal, with 63,156 pupils, or one school to 8·17 square miles of area, and a scholar to 12 boys of school-going age. In 1891-92 the number of schools had risen to 3,617, and that of pupils to 100,204. There was a school to 4·79 square miles, and one boy in eight was under instruction. The largest numerical increase was in primary schools, but the facilities for advanced English education developed rapidly. In 1881-82 there were 14 high schools with 2,287 on their rolls ; while ten years later the numbers were 19 and 3,787 respectively. As regards female education, Northern Bengal is the least advanced of all the divisions of the Province. There were but 1,830 girls at school in 1891-92. The conservatism of the people is greater here than in the eastern districts, which, from an educational point of view, are at least ten years ahead of their north-western neighbours.

Education.

60. In point of material well-being, the peasant of the Bengal districts north of the Ganges has little to complain of. The enquiries of 1889 place this fact in a clear light, though it is possible that the bad years intervening have lowered somewhat the standard of prosperity. The following cases may be quoted, representing the condition of rural affairs in widely different parts of the Division :—

Rural well-being.

A substantial cultivator with a holding of 8·3 acres; produce, 9,033lb of rice, worth Rs. 311: cold weather crops, 1·3 acres, sown on lands which have already given early rice, Rs. 20. Profits from hiring out a cart and pair of bullocks, Rs. 30 ; sale of milk and curds, Rs. 60. Gross income Rs. 421. Deduct rent at Rs. 3-12 per acre, Rs. 31-4 ; and hired labour Rs. 24 ; total Rs. 55-4. Net income Rs. 365-12. He had no debts and his moveable property consisted of five bullocks worth Rs. 75, three milch-cows Rs. 35, one cart Rs. 10, gold and silver ornaments Rs. 60, and brass vessels Rs. 6. His family of eight had three good meals a day of rice, pulse, fish and curds. In the case of six other families on the same estate the income ranged between Rs. 126 and Rs. 113 net; and all save one used brass vessels for eating and possessed silver ornaments. The debts in these cases were Rs. 20, Rs. 41, Rs. 45 and Rs 60. In another large property the incomes and expenditure of 19 families are summarized thus :—

	Acres.
Average holding	9·6
	lb.
Produce in grain	9,960
Kept for seed and home use	6,720
	Rs.
Sold, 3,240lb, realizing	80
Produce of special crops	12
Sale of milk and curds	13
Gross money income	105

Against these profits must be set off the cost of cultivation and rent, Rs. 54-10. Therefore the net balance available for expenditure on all necessaries except grain was Rs. 50-6. The average family consisted of five persons; and the daily allowance was 10lb of rice, 6 oz. pulse, 6 oz. fish and 4 oz. vegetables. These articles, with oil, condiments, spices and salt, provided three substantial meals in the case of adults and four in that of children. The expenditure on food other than grain and pulses, grown on the farm, was Rs. 22, and on clothes Rs. 21: total Rs. 43, leaving a nominal balance of Rs. 7-6 at the close of the year.

Yet a third balance-sheet giving details as to 41 families in another part of the Division—

	Acres.
Area of holding	7
	lb.
Produce	9,420
Retained for home consumption	6,944
	Rs.
Sold, 2,476lb, value	62
Add special crops sold to the value of	6
Total money income	68
Deduct cost of cultivation including rent	26
Remain for food and clothing	42
Add the value of grain retained for home use	173
Gross income	215

The average number of mouths to feed was six, and each adult had three meals a day. The first was the remains of the previous night's rice, soaked in water and eaten cold; and the others, cooked repasts of curry and rice taken at midday and nightfall.

The following is the ordinary scale adopted in a family of middle class cultivators:—

	As.	p.
Rice, 12lb	3	0
Pulse, 12 ounces	0	9
Salt	0	3
Oil	0	3
Vegetables	0	3
Spices and tobacco	0	3
TOTAL ...	4	9

Multiplying this by 365, we get an annual expenditure on food of Rs. 108. Clothes consist of a turban, sometimes worn as a scarf, and a waistcloth in the case of males; and a long strip of cotton, termed sari, draped round the person, in that of females. The average cost of clothing is Rs. 6 for adults and Rs. 2 for children. In a family of six the annual charge in this respect would be Rs. 24. The family dwelling-house is a cluster of huts with walls of bamboo matting and roofs thatched with rice-straw. The materials are afforded by the raiyat's holding, and the cost of labour for repairs is about Rs. 6 annually. Adding these various items of expenditure, we get Rs. 138, leaving a balance of Rs. 85. This, however, in nine cases out of ten is nominal. The vast majority of cultivators owe a year's income at least, and the money-lenders' charges in respect of interest swallow up all possible savings and leave the client still in his clutches. It is conceded on all sides that the condition of the agriculturist in Northern Bengal has sensibly ameliorated during the last 15 years. Improved communications have relieved him from the equally disastrous effects of glut and scarcity. The growing demand for jute and sugar has poured vast wealth into the province. A higher standard of comfort is revealed in more showy attire, the use of umbrellas and of metal eating-vessels. The large body of middle-class folk with fixed incomes from land is not by any means so thriving. It is increasing rapidly, owing to the operation of the laws of inheritance, both in Hindu and Muhammadan communities, which assign shares in an ancestral estate to every descendant, and to the ingrained custom of early marriages. Things are in Bengal as they would be in England if her arts were in embryo, and, with a Code Napoleon to compel equal division of property after death, she had a birth-rate equivalent to that of Russia. The great mass of cultivators prosper; but the class above them, whose social canons preclude their turning their hands to useful labour, is in sorry plight. The discontent of which we have so much on the Congress platform is confined to this section.

Labourers.

61. Agricultural labourers are more numerous in Northern than in East Bengal; the Census returns for 1891 showing 199,144 in the six districts. They are much in request; and while their health lasts they can reckon on making a comfortable living. To take a few representative cases. A is a farm labourer in regular employ. His family consists of a wife, son and child daughter-in-law, who does not contribute to the united earnings. His monthly wages are Rs. 3; and he also receives food worth Rs. 2-8 more; total Rs. 5-8. The son draws Rs. 2 in cash and Rs. 2-8 in food; Rs. 4-8 in all. They also receive clothes, turbans and waist-clothes from their employer, worth Rs. 9 annually. The wife husks paddy for six months in the year, and thus earns Rs. 2-8 per mensem, or Rs. 15 in all. The gross income is thus Rs. 144. The outgoings are, food Rs. 61-4, clothes Rs. 9, ornaments Rs. 9, repairs to house and moveables Rs. 6; total Rs. 85-4. Net balance Rs. 58-12. The son married three years ago, and spent Rs. 100 on the attendant ceremonies, Rs. 50 of which were borrowed from his master at 37½ per cent. The principal he is liquidating by service; but he is charged the interest, Rs. 18-12.

The family owns a pair of silver bracelets worth Rs. 12, and six brass eating and drinking vessels valued at Rs. 4-8. In another case, the labourer possessed four buffaloes, a cart and a pig; but he drank rice-beer to the value of ten annas a week. Six other families on the same estate had incomes of Rs. 184, Rs. 141, Rs. 134, Rs. 126 and Rs. 122, and were indebted to the extent of Rs. 60, Rs. 50, Rs. 6, Rs. 25, Rs. 40 and Rs. 20.

In another estate the labourers generally supplemented their monthly wages by the profits of small patches of cultivation. Their average income was Rs. 107, and their expenditure about the same. Where money alone was given, the daily wage was three annas or Rs. 68 yearly; when wages are partly in cash and partly in food, the former amounts to one anna three pie daily, or Rs. 28-8 annually. The females earned about Rs. 12 yearly by husking paddy; so that the total income is about Rs. 80. This class, though only just able to make two ends meet, consume food in nearly the same quantities as the farmers; but they cannot afford silver ornaments or metal eating-vessels. They are generally in debt. The average sum owed by seven families taken at random was Rs. 43.

II.—Landless Classes.

Manufactures.

62. It would be difficult to point to any part of the world, of equal area and containing eight millions of inhabitants, in which arts and manufactures are in so rudimentary a state as in the Rajshahi Division. The bulk of the necessaries and luxuries consumed, other than food, such as cloth, metalware, paper, glass and salt, are imported, and paid for, not with other manufactures, as in Europe, but with agricultural produce. These districts were once famous for their outturn of indigo; and it is melancholy to see the countless ruined factories which line the principal water-courses, and are direct records of ruin and blighted hopes in many English homes. The year 1891 was especially favourable to this crop; but the produce was only 67 tons. This valuable commodity, in fact, can only be produced where labour is cheap and good land abundant. These conditions are absent in Northern Bengal, where the introduction of far more lucrative staples has increased the raiyats' repulsion for a crop which does not repay him. Silk is another decaying industry. Two hundred years back the Dutch and English filatures of Rajshahi were world-famous, and under the East India Company the export of raw silk was very great. Owing to carelessness in the rearing of cocoons, and the advent of other nations into the field of supply, Bengal silk is slowly being driven out of the market. To add to the misfortune of producers, the mulberry crop of 1891 was a failure. Hence the outturn fell from 89,944lb in 1890 to 44,140 in the former year. The decline of this great industry reacts unfavourably on the prosperity of the Rajshahi district, for no crop is more lucrative than the mulberry; while the method of tillage is such that the value of the land for any other crop is is very small. Mulberry trees, or rather shrubs, are planted in square plots of about half an acre, raised at least three feet above soil level by means of earth taken from vast ditches enclosing them. The labour of forming a plantation is enormous, and the waste of land very great. No crop but mulberry will thrive in these curious plantations, which, seen from a height, give the entire country in some parts of the district the aspect of a chess-board. In marked contrast to the decline of silk and indigo is the vigor displayed by their newer rival, tea. The hills and Terai north of the alluvial tract contain 356 tea-gardens, an increase of 25 in three years. The area of mature plant under cultivation is 68,090 acres, and 14,427 acres contain plants not yet fit for bearing. The yield in pounds in 1891 was 25,690,346, nearly 2¼ million pounds above the average of three years. The yield per acre has fallen since 1889 from 393·5 to 377·2lb. Cinchona is a still newer industry, and it is largely in the hands of Government. The State plantations in the hills produce about 300,000lb per annum, and those in private hands about half as much. Owing, however, to over-supply, which has lowered prices to an unremunerative level, the manufacture of cinchona, from which much was once expected, is languishing, and will shortly be abandoned by the private companies concerned in it. Crude sugar is made in enormous quantities throughout the Division, and the export from the single district of Rajshahi was 2,100 tons in 1891-92. That for the seven districts is not less than 15,000 tons. Gunny-cloth and bags are manufactured at Sirajganj with European machinery to an immense extent. The value of the exports under this head is about Rx. 500,000 annually. The indigenous industries are of very small importance; the principal being the manufacture of coarse cotton cloth from English twist on hand-looms, and of brass and bell-metal eating and drinking utensils.

Artizans.

63. Artizans are few in number and the level of skill is very low. In view of raising it, the District Board of Rangpur founded a Technical Institute in 1889, which teaches carpentry and blacksmith's work; and this movement bids fair to extend. Masons earn 3 annas 8 pie to Re. 1 per diem; a really skilled man being always able to command the higher wage. Carpenters make 5 annas to Re. 1, and blacksmiths 5 annas to 10 annas. Again, taking typical cases of artizans, we have a basket-maker, age 30; household, wife and two children. He earns three annas per diem on an average, or Rs. 60 annually. His wife makes about Rs. 30 by husking paddy. Thus the total earnings are Rs. 90. The whole is spent on clothes and food. Has three meals a day. No debts. His moveables consist of a few rough articles of furniture, silver ornaments worth Rs. 8, and seven brass vessels, Rs. 7; total value Rs. 15. B is a blacksmith. His family consists of a wife and child. Earns Rs. 115 yearly, and has no debts. His property consists of silver ornaments worth Rs. 12, and brass utensils Rs. 10. C is a carpenter, married but childless. Earns 3 annas daily or Rs. 67 annually. Has 2·3 acres which he lets out on the half-produce system, and this raises his income to Rs. 75; has no debts; possesses four metal eating vessels, valued at Rs. 3. In contrast to this comparative prosperity, we have a colony of 21 families of weavers, whose hereditary craft

has been rendered well-nigh useless by European competition. The largest family numbers 11 members, and there are two of 10 each, the average number being 5. The first household earns Rs. 202 annually, the two next mentioned Rs. 182 or thereabouts each, and the smallest, a single male and a female, Rs. 30 and Rs. 24. The average expenditure on food is within a few rupees of the income. The consumption of rice is 1½lb. per head daily, and the number of meals taken two. In the case of these people the load of debt is appalling. One household, earning Rs. 128, owes Rs. 800. Another with an income of Rs. 107 is indebted to the extent of Rs. 400; and a third, making Rs. 132, owes Rs. 250. The debts of the rest range between Rs. 100 and Rs. 14.

Beggars.

64. Beggars are mostly religious mendicants, Hindu and Muhammadan, and they are well-fed, sturdy fellows. The minority is made up of aged widows left alone in the world, and the physically infirm. Lepers are not at all common. All find a comfortable maintenance in ordinary times in the boundless charity which is so pleasing a feature in the native character.

Urban population.

65. The urban population of Northern Bengal is even more insignificant than that of the eastern districts. There are six towns with more than 10,000 inhabitants, and the largest, Sirajganj, has but 23,267. In is the seat of important jute manufactures under English supervision, and the population increased during the decade by more than 10 per cent. The growth of Darjeeling has been phenomenal. Its population has doubled in ten years, and now stands at 14,145. The rest are mere groups of villages, with a straggling bazar, which subsist upon the courts and public offices.

Emigration.

66. Northern Bengal is in marked contrast to the eastern and central districts in still possessing large tracts of fertile land available for the settler. The people are far better off than their neighbours of the west and south; and the slender facilities afforded for reclaiming waste land in Assam do not tempt them to move in that direction. Hence there is practically no emigration from these districts. On the other hand, something has been done to encourage an inflow of population. A colony of Sonthals on an estate under Government direction in the Rangpur district has cleared 1,800 acres of dense forest, and is doing well. It has passed through the usual troubles which beset an infant settlement and have led to failure in the case of similar experiments in the neighbouring district of Dinajpur. Of temporary immigrants there is no lack. Vast numbers of coolies from the North-Western Provinces and Oudh arrive on foot at the commencement of the cold-weather, to assist in getting in the harvest, labour on the roads, and serve as palanquin-bearers. These people leave for their homes when the annual rains set in.

Excise.

67. The excise revenue is larger than that of the eastern districts: for all these temporary visitors are spirit-drinkers. In spite of restrictions imposed on the manufacture of spirituous liquor, the revenue from that source has risen in ten years from Rx. 16,156 to Rx. 36,721. That from opium and ganja show substantial but not proportionate increases, though the taxation on these articles is also heavier than it was ten years back. *Tari*, or fermented palm-juice, is not gaining in favour. Five-eighths of the population, or 5,025,330 persons, profess the Muhammadan creed, and almost to a man are members of the Feruzi sect, which prohibits the use of intoxicants.

IV.—Central Bengal.

The Presidency Division.

Geography.

68. The central districts form the Presidency Division, so-called because it includes the capital. They are, the 24-Parganas, Nadia, Jessore, Khulna and Murshidabad, with an area of 12,068 square miles and a census population of 8,535,126; 707 persons to the square mile. The northern half is a good example of an old-settled, well-raised, deltaic tract, still subject to fluvial action, and to inundations which in ordinary years fertilize the soil and occasionally devastate the crops. The southern portion exhibits the delta in a less advanced stage of growth, covered with swamps, and ending towards the coast in a network of sluggish channels and backwaters, through which the Gangetic distributaries reach the sea.

Communication.

In respect of facilities for trade, the Division is greatly superior to Northern Bengal. There are few villages which are not within easy distance of a river, navigable throughout the year by native crafts. The Eastern Bengal State Railway runs through it from north to south, and with its branches has a mileage of 348, of which 141 miles were constructed during the decade. Including 15 miles of a short branch from the loop line of the East Indian Railway running towards Murshidabad, the total length of line is 363 miles, or one mile of railway to 33·2 square miles of area. The dangers of the route by water from the eastern districts to Calcutta have been lessened by the canalization of the tidal creeks and rivers of the Sundarbans, as the outer fringe of the deltaic formation is termed. These works, known as the Calcutta and Eastern Canals, have cost from first to last Rx. 520,000. A great development has taken place of recent years in the steam-navigation of the rivers. The Hooghly and its tributaries are admirably served by the steamers of a Calcutta Company. Three services have been started on rivers of the Jessore district. The Nadia rivers, the Mathabhanga and Bhagirathi, which are under Governmental supervision, have similar facilities. Finally Khulna the head-quarters of the district of that name, and terminus of a line constructed in

6853

1881-82, and now a part of the Eastern Bengal Railway system, is connected with the wealthy eastern district of Backergunge by a steamer service. In the matter of roads the Division is well supplied. There are 4,095 miles, of which 526 are metalled, or one mile to 2·95 square miles of area.

Trade.

69. The trade of the Division centres in Calcutta, which was visited in 1891-92 by 1,121 ocean-going vessels, with a gross burden of 2,922,769 tons. The imports during that year were Rx. 35,226,242, as compared with Rx. 27,259,462 in 1881-82. They consist of the following articles, named in order of their importance:—Cotton goods, metals, mineral oil, machinery, woollens, sugar, salt, liquor, and hardware. Figures comparing the imports at the beginning and end of the decennial period may be here given. Though this commerce belongs only in part to the Presidency Division, its main features need record, if only for the light they throw on the progress of Bengal. The total imports in 1881-82 were Rx. 27,259,462; in 1891-92, Rx. 35,226,242. Cotton goods were imported in 1881-82 to the value of Rx. 11,403,000, in 1890-91 to that of Rx. 13,552,000. In the following year the imports fell to Rx. 12,609,000, a fact due to the abnormal scarcity and sickness which have affected nearly every district, and to business losses owing to the violent oscillations of exchange. Metals show an increase in value from Rx. 1,734,000 to Rx. 2,448,000, due to the increasing cheapness of raw material in the United Kingdom and the industrial development of the Province. In mineral oil we see a sustained forward movement. In 1881-82 cocoanut and castor oil reigned almost supreme as illuminants, and the imports of kerosine were only to the value of Rx. 275,000, the United States of America being the main source of supply. In 1891-92 the imports were worth Rx. 1,344,000, and Russia was rapidly overtaking North America. The quantity imported last year was 34,875,000 gallons, about half a gallon per head of the population of Bengal, excluding Orissa, which is served through its own ports. This advance, in spite of a trifling duty on mineral oils imposed during the decade, is a sure indication of constantly advancing prosperity. The imports of machinery increased in value from Rx. 488,000 to Rx. 826,000, a fact attributable to large extensions of mills and of tea plantations. In salt, a drop in imports took place in 1891-92 from 318,682 to 312,134 tons. This, as already explained in the review of Chittagong, is due to an alteration in the mechanism of the salt trade. The imports of lucifer matches, like those of mineral oils, indicate an advance in material comfort in the people. They amounted to Rx. 75,000 in 1891-92, or 25 per cent. more than those of the previous year. The imports of umbrellas rose from 1,345,000 in 1881-82, valued at Rx. 103,000, to 2,281,408, worth Rx. 212,000. This trade would be still more considerable but for the fluctuations of exchange, which, indeed, have seriously affected the profits of importers and have hampered the commerce of Calcutta in every branch. The exports show equal elasticity. They have grown from Rx. 40,939,000 to Rx. 50,676,000 in ten years. In order of importance they stand as follows:—Raw jute, opium, tea, oilseeds, rice, indigo, hides, and wheat.

Jute.

70. The earlier statistics as regards raw jute are most unsatisfactory, a fact the more to be regretted as it is exclusively a Bengal product, and the trade has a very important bearing on the well-being of the people. Looking back to 1887-88, we find 411,334 tons of raw jute exported, the value being Rx. 5,056,000. Prices rose steadily during the two years following; and in 1890-91 they stood so high that the raiyats were tempted to over-produce. The crop of 1890-91 was the largest on record; 530,300 tons, worth Rx. 6,447,000, were exported. But the supply was in excess of the needs of Dundee and the continent of Europe. A glut ensued; prices fell from an average of Rs. 166 per ton in 1889-90 to one of Rs. 121, and in 1891-92 the quantity of raw jute exported was only 380,000 tons, valued at Rx. 6,082,000. The latter figures show an approximation in price to that prevailing in the year before the glut, but it is the middlemen, and not, as a rule, the cultivators, who have reaped the profit. The exports of opium are nearly stationary. They average 4,150 tons valued at Rx. 6,000,000; but prices show a marked tendency to decline. Indian tea has progressed rapidly during the decade, in spite of a progressive decline in prices. The figures for the last five years show that in 1887-88, 86,049,000lb were exported at an average price of 9 annas 5 pie, making a total value of Rx. 5,165,000, while in 1891-92, 115,584,000lb left Calcutta, priced at 7 annas 8 pie only, and valued at Rx. 5,633,000. The value of oilseeds exported rose from Rx. 2,515,000 in 1881-82 to Rx. 4,132,000 in 1891-92. The movement in the latter year was 17 per cent. in advance of that of the preceding one—a fact most gratifying, because oilseeds are raised on land which has already borne rice or jute. They form a portion of the *rabi* cold weather crops, which are in many districts regarded by custom as safe from the clutches of the money-lender. Hence the raiyat profits by this traffic more than he does by his rice, which is swept into his banker's garners. In wheat the exports were in 1891-92, 237,000 tons, worth Rx. 2,118,000. They were 254 per cent. in advance of those of 1890-91, but not much beyond the exports of 1881-82, which were valued at Rx. 2,520,000. This trade had been declining for three years, and the upward move was entirely the offspring of the Russian famine. It has enriched the merchants of Bihar and the North-Western Provinces, but has depleted stocks and raised prices in Western Bengal to well nigh famine limits. In sharp contrast to the vigorous development of the export trade, as a whole, we have the decline of indigo, in which so much European capital is embarked. The exports in 1881-82 were valued at Rx. 3,151,000, and in 1891-92 at Rx. 2,636,000 only. The quantity exported in the latter year was 4,900 tons, larger than that of any year since 1887-88; but prices are steadily declining. The once important silk industry is also on the wane. In 1887-88, 1,509,230lb were sent out of the country,

valued at Rx. 465,000, and last year the exports were but 1,462,000lb, worth Rx. 498,000. The trade in silk piece-goods is still more a record of ruin. Its value has fallen in five years from Rx. 341,000 to Rx. 134,000. The fortunes of these industries are not without their effect on the peasant class; for the increasing indebtedness of the Nadia and Jessore raiyat is in part due to the decay of the indigo-planting industry; while the slow decline of silk has caused disaster to the mulberry grower of Murshidabad and crowded the ranks of cultivators with disbanded weavers. These, however, are but spots in the brilliant sun of Calcutta's commerce. In spite of many adverse conditions, it continues to grow with and reflect the prosperity of the Province. The statistics of the internal commerce of the Division are well nigh as voluminous as those relating to the port of Calcutta. The Calcutta and Eastern Canals, which are the main routes for country boats plying between the districts of the east and the capital, were traversed in the year ending 30th September 1891 by 157,000 craft, of an aggregate burden of 2,610,000 tons, carrying cargo valued at Rx. 6,192,000. The traffic on the Nadia rivers, which have been partially canalized in past years, was carried on in 64,777 boats, with a tonnage of 899,000; and the goods conveyed by these routes were estimated at Rx. 3,993,321. Much of this is "through" traffic, but all goes to feed the commerce of Calcutta.

Crops.

71. Like the rest of Bengal, the central districts suffered in 1891-92 from an abnormally small rainfall, and the result has been but too apparent in the short outturn of the crops. Things were but little better during the two previous years, and the averages for that period have been very poor. The figure for wheat is 56, for pulses 63, for early rice, a very important crop in these parts, 57, for winter rice 64, for jute 87, and for the cold-weather crops 51. The latter include chillies, oil-seeds, pulses, turmeric and ginger, with occasional patches of wheat and barley. They are considered the raiyat's *peculium*, and provide him with his humble luxuries. Hence the poor outturn of the cold-weather crops seriously diminishes his purchasing power. Immense damage is done in the northern portions of this Division by floods from the Ganges and its tributaries. The latter flow on beds raised by the constant deposit of silt above the level of the surrounding country; and the waters at flood level have been restrained by an immense system of embankments, many of which date back to Moghul times. These are frequently overtopped and breached, in spite of the utmost vigilance on the part of Government officials; and the early rice, just as it is coming into ear, is destroyed on vast areas by floods. Hardly a year passes but disasters of the kind occur; and but for the immense loss which the present generation would incur, it would undoubtedly be better to remove these embankments and permit the surplus water to spill over the country. Thus would the soil be fertilized by the silt, and gradually raised in level. The question of dealing with these rivers is one of moment to the cultivator, and it is engaging the earnest attention of Government.

Prices.

72. The farmer has experienced some mitigation of his losses in the shape of higher prices for food-grains. In three years the quantity of wheat purchasable for a rupee has fallen from 28 to 24lb, that of common rice from 30 to 26lb, and of pulses from 34 to 30lb. It is only the landless section of the community, and that which depends for existence on fixed rents, which see no alleviation in a high range of prices.

Land Revenue.

73. In view of the superior advantages possessed by the Division in the proximity of markets and in means of communication, it cannot be said that the taxation on land presses with undue severity. The districts comprising it are among the oldest of our acquisitions on this side of India. The 24-Parganas may almost be termed the nucleus of our Eastern Empire. It came into English hands as a zamindari, held under the Subadar of Bengal, in 1757. Murshidabad was the capital of the Province till 1772; and the other districts were better cultivated and more tranquil than those of the north and east. Thus the land revenue bore a larger proportion to the assets than it did in the Divisions which I have already described. The present demand in respect of revenue and cesses is Rx. 584,867, or 11 annas 6 pie per inhabitant and 12 annas 2 pie per acre. The incidence, however, is very unequal. The 24-Parganas is the most heavily assessed, Murshidabad comes second, and Nadia and Jessore are very moderately taxed. Khulna, which dates as a separate administrative unit only from 1882, was a forest at the time of the Permanent Settlement, and a large portion of the south was still in process of formation by alluvial action. The land revenue there is consequently lighter than that of the other districts. The result has undoubtedly been that an extension of cultivation has been fostered. There is now very little cultivable waste in Murshidabad, Nadia and Jessore, though extensive reclamations are possible by means of a judicious draining of the swamps which dot the country. The area under the plough is 5,457,557 out of 9,780,422 acres. The waste amounts to 4,322,865 acres, but much of this is included in the Sundarbans, which cover 4,820,040 acres, and for the most part serves as a fuel-reserve for Calcutta.

Landlord and tenant.

74. Land in this Division is not much subdivided. There are 63,349 estates, the property of private individuals, and tenures on the rolls—an average of 154 acres each as compared with the total area. Large properties abound, but in most cases the zamindars reside in Calcutta and leave things a good deal to agents. There is, however, but little oppression; for justice is brought home to every man's door; there is a nearer approach to public spirit than elsewhere, and the native press is vigilant. The raiyats of these districts are keen-witted and only too prone to assert their rights, real or supposed, in the courts of law. The existence of occupancy rights has long been recognized everywhere, and the Tenancy Act, by affirming them and providing safeguards

against the constant harassment exercised by unscrupulous landlords, has given the upper hand to tenants. An agitation was set on foot during the decade against some of the European indigo-planters, who, though fallen from their high estate, are still a powerful factor in district politics. They are all considerable landowners, and several were brought to the verge of ruin by the organized refusal of their raiyats to pay rent or grow indigo. The movement was checked by judicious action on the part of Government officers, but not before great mischief had been done. With this exception, the relation between zamindar and raiyat have been free from serious friction.

Census results, 1891.

75. The population of these old-settled districts was already too dense in 1881 to admit of a ratio of increase such as we have seen in the east: but with the many factors making for improvement, which were unknown ten years ago, it is strange to find a positive decline in parts of this, the most civilized portion of the Province. The total in 1881 was 8,204,982, and in 1891, 8,530,126, an increase of 330,214; or 4 per cent. The 24-Parganas, including Calcutta and its straggling suburbs, shows an increase of 270,515 or 11·5 per cent., as compared with the returns of 1881. This is due to the ever-increasing attraction of the metropolis for persons with means, the growth of manufactures attracting the labouring class, and to its superior accessibility. The population of Murshidabad rose by 24,156 on a population of 1,226,790 in 1881, and Khulna by 97,704 on 1,079,948. The numbers of Nadia fell from 1,666,795 to 1,644,108, and Jessore from 1,939,375 to 1,888,827, a decrease of 18,687 and 50,548 respectively. For the exact ratio borne by the classes who live by agriculture, to the total, cannot be ascertained at the stage of compilation arrived at by the Census Commissioner. In 1881 these classes bore a ratio of 37 per cent. of the total, and assuming the figures to be correct, they apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the present day.

Public health.

76. The decline of Nadia and Jessore is due entirely to the ravages of disease; for the Presidency Division is, next to that of Rajshahi, the most unhealthy in Bengal. This is in part due to the silent operation of great natural changes. The line of drainage in the lower delta was from north-west to south-east while the process of alluvial formation was in progress. When that was complete, the line shifted from north to south. In other words, it was determined by the direction of the drainage from the portion of the great Himalayan water-shed north of Bengal proper, and not by the course of the Gangetic system fed by the snows of Upper India. The innumerable watercourses which flowed parallel with the great river thus became inoperative, and, to use a graphic native expression, they 'died.' Nadia and Jessore are seamed with the beds of these extinct rivers, and the few which maintain a languid vitality during the rains are now a chain of fœtid swamps. The evil has been intensified by the construction of railways and "feeder" roads with insufficient waterway, and it can only be remedied by drainage canals on a gigantic scale. And then, the whole population is regardless of sanitation. They have a proverb implying that jungle brings prosperity, and with this notion they allow their homesteads to be encircled by a dense mass of trees and undergrowth, which serves as a latrine. Drinking-water is taken from open tanks, not wells, as in Northern Bengal, subject to pollution by surface drainage, and used for washing clothes and bathing by human beings and animals. The recorded mortality from all causes was 33·80 in 1891-92, that from fever alone being 26·12, or considerably in excess of that of the United Kingdom from every cause. The ratio of mortality from cholera was 4·48 as compared with one of 3·26 for the whole Province. This is attributable to the long drought, which impaired the water-supply, and to the inrush of several hundred thousand pilgrims eager to bathe in the sacred Hooghly and Bhagirathi. 1891-92 was indeed an abnormally sickly year; but there can be no doubt that the climate of large portions of the Presidency Division has been deteriorating for many years past, and that the standard of vitality of the agricultural population has been seriously lowered by disease.

Education.

77. Education has made greater strides during the decade than sanitary science. In 1881-82 there were only 1,654 schools of all classes, with 73,037 pupils; one school to 7·29 square miles, and one scholar to 10 boys of a school-going age. In 1891-92 these insignificant numbers had risen to 5,996 and 188,755, while the proportions stood at 2·01 and 4. This rich and enlightened Division still lags behind Burdwan, the eastern districts, and even Orissa, in facilities for educating the masses. It is interesting to compare this tract with a really advanced community. At the end of 1891, New Zealand, with a population of 650,000, had 119,000 boys and girls at school. On this basis, the Presidency Division should show 2,457,000 pupils on its school rolls. It is satisfactory to remark that the increase is mainly in primary schools, the number of which have risen from 1,185 to 5,240, and that the growth of high schools has not been in excess of the demand for their product.

Rural well-being.

78. The years of poor harvests through which the Division has passed have told on the condition of the cultivator, and it is not as good as it was at the time of the enquiries of 1888. Those enquiries resulted in a vast mass of information being gathered, which, though it is desultory and ill-arranged, has great value for the economist. In the 24-Parganas an analysis made of the means of 158 cultivating families with 4·5 members apiece showed that the average holding was 4·7 acres, the rent paid Rs. 4-3 per acre, including village-watch cess. The net income was Rs. 75. Each family had a pair of, and sometimes three, bullocks. They all used metal vessels in eating and drinking. In nothing is the advance in comfort brought about by the last 20 years more manifest than in these humble adjuncts of domestic

economy. In times within middle-aged persons' memory Muhammadan raiyats ate from unglazed earthenware trenchers, and a farmer's wife brought him his meals afield in an earthen pot. Now, a man farming 20 or 30 acres has at least 28 metal vessels, of different shapes and sizes, for eating and drinking purposes; and his midday meal is taken to him in a huge brazen cup. Even labourers use seven different sorts of metal pots and plates. So, too, with jewellery. The wife of the raiyat whose mother wore bracelets worth Rs. 20 is now covered with massive silver ornaments of three or four times the value. But increased taste and means have also left their mark on social ceremonies. A cultivator of the lowest grade now spends Rs. 50, a whole year's earnings, on a marriage or funeral; and one of a higher class will willingly put down Rs. 300 on such occasions. Ninety-one out of 125 families in one village had silver and a few small gold ornaments worth from Rs. 10 to Rs. 30. Those of the remaining 34 were content with shellac and brass bracelets. One hundred and sixteen of the 158 families previously mentioned were in debt, their liabilities varying from Rs. 25 to Rs. 400, with an average of Rs. 72. The amount in each case was nearly equal to a year's income. Indebtedness in Central Bengal is the rule, but it must not be accepted as an indication of distress. The village money-lender, *mahajan*, has functions which are those of a banker and an insurance office. He is to be found in every village where his cluster of circular thatched garners tower above the mud walls of the enclosure, guarding his *penates* from the public eye. It is in the nature of Bengalis of nearly every class to borrow to the full extent of their credit, and the existence of a debt is a proof of the possession of means, and therefore prosperity rather than the reverse. Debts are incurred to provide the cost of ceremonies, or more rarely to enable the borrower to tide over a bad year. In the majority of cases the money-lender pays the raiyat's rent and cesses, furnishes him with seed grain, and with rice for consumption during the eight months wherein the land does not yield its increase. He charges for this accommodation 37½ per cent per annum on all advances of cash and grain. The rate may appear exorbitant, but it is not more than is required to give a fair return on capital, and compensate for losses from deaths and the dishonesty of the raiyat. For it often happens that the latter, after getting hopelessly deep into the *mahajan's* books, flits at night time with his moveables to a distant village, where he has relatives who will assist him and give him a fresh start in life. It is very rare that *mahajans* amass fortunes. They secure themselves as far as possible by appropriating the whole of the rice crop, crediting the client with its proceeds at market rates. The cold-weather crops, on the other hand, are guarded by custom from the money-lender's clutches. By selling these, the raiyat provides his family with salt, clothes, tobacco, oil and spices. Speaking generally, cultivators of the metropolitan districts, who hold directly from the zamindar, are well-to-do. The under-tenant,—for sub-infeudation is very general—though paying exorbitant rates of rent, is able in ordinary times to provide himself with all necessaries. In Nadia circumstances vary greatly. There are tracts which are above flood level and never receive fertilizing deposits of silt. Manure is rarely used in this Division, and land in this situation becomes exhausted after many years' continual cropping. In other cases the level is too low and the inundation from the rivers sweeps over the land as the early rice is on the point of ripening. Poverty is the normal condition of villages whose lands come under either category, but on the other hand population is sparse. Enquiries were made as to the circumstances of six groups of villages in Nadia, scattered over a wide area, and possessing lands of every description. Group A included 200 families, with an average household number of 6·9, and a total of 1,391 persons; 44 were cultivators pure and simple, 18 of whom held directly from the zamindar, and 22 from other raiyats on the system known in these districts as *karfa*, something like the French *metayage*, by which the sub-tenant pays half the produce. Of the 40 families, 23 had one plough, 8 two ploughs, 2 three ploughs, 3 four ploughs, and 1 five ploughs. Each of the ploughs required two pairs of oxen, and the number maintained gives a means of gauging a raiyat's prosperity. The family owning the largest number cultivated 33·3 acres and paid Rs. 130-6 as rent, Rs. 3-12 an acre. The family with four ploughs held 4 acres directly from the zamindar, paying Rs. 12 as rent, and 44 more on the half-produce system. Two ploughs are required for eight acres, and one for four acres and less. A representative family of the poorer class held four acres at Rs. 13-8 rental. They had four bullocks worth Rs. 8 each, and two ploughs; 1·3 acres were under early rice, producing in ordinary years 920lbs., and as much sown with late rice producing 960lbs. The gross value of this crop is Rs. 60. The cold-weather crops were ·66 acre of a kind of pulse called *kalai*, and ·3 acre of peas; gross produce Rs. 24. The total money-value is Rs. 84, or, deducting rent, Rs. 70-8 net. In another group, B, a family of four members held five acres at a rental of Rs. 18-12, Rs. 3-10 an acre. The produce was rice 6,240lbs., value Rs. 160; cold-weather crops, pulses, chillies and oilseeds, Rs. 15, turmeric Rs. 25, sugarcane Rs. 45, total Rs. 245. Deduct rent Rs. 18-12; expenses of hired labourers at harvest and sowing time Rs. 30; total Rs. 48-12. Net income, Rs. 196-4. In three other groups, D. E. and F. the average outturn in pounds per acre was as follows:—

Groups.	D.	E.	F.
Early rice	2,550	1,980	1,820
Late rice	2,640	2,550	2,550
Tobacco	1,080	.....	960
Oilseeds	.....	.....	540
Pulses	480	480	410

The value of straw when sold is Rs. 9-12 on the average per acre; but it is usually given to the cattle as fodder, and the stalks of the pulse serve the same purpose. A practised eye can form a fairly accurate notion of the raiyat's crop by observing the dimension of the stocks or rather mounds of straw and pulse-stalks which grace his homestead.

The rates of rent are as follows per acre :—

Group.	D. Rs. A. P.	E. Rs. A. P.	F. Rs. A. P.
Land producing late rice .	4 8 0	5 4 0	4 8 0
Do. do. early rice ..	5 4 0	6 0 0	3 0 0
Do. do. tobacco ... / Do. do. jute ...	6 0 0	.....	6 0 0

The cost of cultivation is not easy to arrive at. An ordinary family uses extraneous labour only at sowing time and harvest, and not always then. Valuing the raiyat's own labour and that of his dependents at the current rates of labour, we get the following table representing all charges but rent :—

Group.	D. Rs. A. P.	E. Rs. A. P.	F. Rs. A. P.
Early rice	15 12 0	15 0 0	15 0 0
Late do.	13 8 0	11 8 0	11 8 0
Tobacco	39 0 0	.....	45 0 0
Jute	15 0 0	.....	15 0 0

Oilseeds, pulses, wheat, barley, and chillies, included in the term *rabi* or cold-weather crops, involve very little expense beyond the cost of seed, for the land must be ploughed up after the rains when the paddy harvest is over, whether it is intended to crop it again or not. The following table gives the prices per 100lbs ruling for agricultural produce at the time of the enquiry :—

	Rs. A. P.
Paddy	1 4 0
Tobacco	10 0 0
Jute	6 0 0
Pulses	1 14 0
Oilseeds	4 6 0

Prices have risen from 20 to 30 per cent. in the interim; but, on the other hand, produce has fallen to nearly the same ratio. Hence the data given apply very nearly to present conditions, and they are of value as a means of calculating the actual resources of the Central Bengal raiyat. In group D, a farmer holding 23 acres had the following balance sheet :—

	Rs. A. P.
10 acres rice, including straw, at Rs. 19-8 per acre	255 0 0
3·3 acres tobacco	210 0 0
1·66 acres jute	65 0 0
6·6 acres pulse	60 0 0
Total	590 0 0

This is what is considered a large farming. The average raiyat holds 3·3 to 5 acres, and makes a net profit of Rs. 144. Five acres is the lowest area compatible with comfort. To turn to the expenditure of this class. The man above quoted, farming 23 acres, has a family of 15 to support; and they require 16,000lb of paddy, or rice in the husk, for their annual consumption. This husks into about 9,000lb of rice, and furnishes each person, adult and infant, with 1·61b per diem on the average. He also requires 800lb. of pulses. Both are the product of his farm. His expenditure at market is Rs. 40 on oil, salt Rs. 12, spices Rs. 12, fish and vegetables Rs. 24, repairs to house Rs. 50, clothing Rs. 60. The annual cost of a male adult's dress is Rs. 2, a female's Rs. 3, and a child's Re. 1. The total money expenditure is Rs. 198. The value of the rice and pulses retained for home consumption is Rs. 413: a total of Rs. 611, or Rs. 40-11-9 per head. The actual cost of producing the grain and pulse retained being much below Rs. 413, there is really a substantial balance at the close of the year. The second class of farmer is typified by one holding 13·3 acres, with nine mouths to feed. The third class is by far the most numerous. The holdings vary between 7 and 8 acres, and the produce is about 13,760lb of rice, of which 5,600lb are required to feed a family of 5·5 persons. The surplus, 8,160lb, sells for Rs. 102. Besides the rice, there is a produce from tobacco of Rs. 108, from pulses Rs. 24, and from jute Rs. 40, a total of Rs. 274. Assuming the expenditure on food and other necessaries to be one-third of that of the wealthier neighbours, a farmer of this class would have a balance of Rs. 203 to provide rent, extra labour and other expenses. With earnings on this scale, debt ought to be unknown; but, as a matter of fact, nine out of ten are deep in the money-lenders' books. In Jessore, the raiyats are slightly better off than are their Nadia neighbours. Large profits are made from plantations of date trees, the juice of which is boiled up into crude sugar. Those of Khulna are the most prosperous of all, and their circumstances are much the same of those of Backergungo. To Murshidabad the statistics of Nadia apply; but here a raiyat has the additional resource of mulberry cultivation, which pays well, and rearing silk-worms. A profit of Rs. 80, and even more, may be made in this way by a family of six. The decline of the silk manufacture is severely felt in Murshidabad.

79. The agricultural labourers do not muster very strongly in the Presidency Division. The numbers at the last census were 99,172, of whom 43,937 were found in the 24-Parganas. In two selected villages of that district there were 142 labouring families, averaging four persons each, which held between them 73 acres, rented at Rs. 575. The profit from this half acre of homestead is Rs. 7, and their other earnings Rs. 53, a total of Rs. 60. In another village, rather more than a third of the labourers had no land, and 95 were in debt to the extent of Rs. 42 each. All families but six used brass vessels; in five out of eight the females wore silver ornaments, and in the other three glass, lac and brass ones. They lived as well as the lower class raiyat holding 3 to 5 acres. Their credit being bad, they were not so deeply in the money-lenders' books as their landed brethren. In Nadia an agricultural labourer in group D was paid Rs. 6-8 0 per mensem, and had 3 acres of homestead. In another case, where food was given, the labourer drew Rs. 3 per mensem in cash. The daily rate of wage is 3 annas 3 pie to 4 annas; the higher scale being that current at harvest time. Labourers are eagerly sought after and get regular work. Their male children begin to add to the family earnings on attaining the age of six. The women-folk also earn a trifle by husking paddy and making cowdung cakes for sale as fuel in the hours not given to household duties. On the whole, the lot of the agricultural labourer in the Presidency Division is a happy one. He lives comfortably on his earnings, and is free from the carking cares which beset the smaller farmers. The fact that no local coolies are to be had for public works, that all must be imported from Upper India, indicates that the demand for unskilled labour here does not keep pace with the supply.

Labourers.

II.—LANDLESS CLASSES.

80. Industrial enterprise in the Presidency Division is on a scale unknown in other parts of Bengal. Forty-six large factories are at work, employing at least 18,000 hands. They include cotton and jute mills, turning out twist and gunny-bags and cloth, respectively, refined sugar, paper, silk, ice and shell-lac. The annual production of gunnies is estimated at Rx. 1,000,000, of twist Rx. 689,000, of lac Rx. 120,000, and paper Rx. 100,000. Indigo was once the chief industry of the northern districts, and it is satisfactory to find the planters who have survived the agitation directed against their enterprize doing unusually well. The outturn in 1891 was 944,560lb, valued at Rx. 216,900. Sugar is manufactured on a large scale in the Jessore district from the juice of the date-palm. This industry is thriving, and the present outturn of crude sugar is 357,000 tons, worth Rx. 294,350. The silk manufactures of Murshidabad were once famous throughout India; but they are slowly perishing under the attacks of worm disease, and Chinese and Italian competition. The number of filatures has fallen in three years from 81 to 64, and 10,000 operatives have been thrown out of work. The amount of silk produced has declined during that period from 352,860lb, worth Rx. 275,000, to 309,149lb, of the value of Rx. 229,000. But if the silk-reelers' craft is a decaying one, much more so is that of the weaver. Public taste seems to have changed, and to prefer the cheaper but less beautiful products of European factories. The imports into the port of Calcutta of silk piece-goods have risen in five years from 885,000 yards, worth Rx. 108,000, to 1,132,417 yards, worth Rx. 122,000. The native industry is within measurable distance of extinction.

Industries.

81. So too with the cotton-weavers, except at Santipur, a great seat of Sanskrit learning in the Nadia district, whose coarse but durable hand-made cotton cloths have a great vogue throughout the Division. The wages of skilled labour are in this country determined rather by custom than by the price of food. Those of masons and carpenters have stood for many years past at 8 annas to Re. 1 per diem. Blacksmiths earn from 8 to 12 annas, and thatchers 5 annas 3 pie. Most artizans have small patches of garden land. Thus in the 24-Parganas 37 families were found in possession of rather more than an acre apiece. Their earnings from trade averaged Rs. 73, and those from land half as much; a total of about Rs. 100. 20 out of 37 were in debt to the extent of Rs. 93 apiece; men of this class have a wide sphere of labour in the numerous factories, including the Government Foundry at Cossipore and the Small Arms Factory at Dum-Dum, besides private concerns. Thus weavers are deserting their hand-looms and seeking employment in European mills, where a spinner can earn Rs. 10 per mensem with ease. In Nadia a goldsmith was found who earned Rs. 60 by his craft, Rs. 25 by the produce of 2·3 acres of rice-land sublet on the half produce system, and Re. 1 by the sale of fruit. This man had a cow which gave 3lb of milk per diem. The milk was used at home. Had it been sold it would have realised 1 anna 6 pie a day. An oilman, whose hereditary avocation it is to express mustard and other vegetable oils by a rude press worked, on the principle of the pestle and mortar, by oxen, earned Rs. 80 by his mill and Rs. 90 by the produce of 5·60 acres of land, or Rs. 170 in all. This man had a family of 17, 14 of whom were not wage-earners: and he admitted that he might save Rs. 90 if he pleased. Weavers earn Rs. 42 per annum and washermen Rs. 60. The artizan class throughout the Division is flourishing, except, in some cases, weavers.

Artizans.

82. Beggars are estimated to amount to rather more than 1 per cent. of the population. The aged and infirm feel the effects of high prices and scarcity, and it is they alone who require careful watching in times of stress.

Beggars.

83. The urban population of the Presidency Division is larger than any other in Bengal. There are 20 towns of more than 10,000 inhabitants. Calcutta, with a population of 684,658 in 1881 and 741,144

Urban population.

in 1891, heads the list. The increase, however, is due to the inclusion in the metropolis of a portion of the straggling suburbs which previously counted as separate towns. There is no room for growth in the nucleus of this area. The other towns within a radius of five miles from Calcutta all show a considerable increase in population, and the evidences of growing wealth are unmistakeable. Krishnagar, the head-quarters of the Nadia district, lost nearly 2,000 inhabitants in the decade, a fact due to neglected drainage and sanitation. Still more melancholy is the future of Murshidabad, which 120 years ago had more inhabitants than the London of the day. If population now stands at 35,576, a decrease of 3,655 on the figures of 1881. The Chairman of the Calcutta Corporation is unable to give me any information as to the condition of the lower classes of that city. Except in the case of the poorer Europeans and Eurasians, who are often reduced to great straits, there is no grinding poverty in Calcutta. The struggle for life is by no means so great as in a European capital, and "sweating" is unknown. The Christian population of Calcutta is less than 30,000, and the "submerged tenth" does not exceed 3,000. The future of the Eurasian residue is hopeless, and the task of attempting their regeneration is utterly beyond the scope of the functions of Government. It is perhaps matter for congratulation that this class is not increasing. Though population is dense in this Division, there is still abundance of work for those who are able-bodied. Except in a few congested tracts, where malarial fever is doing its work, there is no pressing necessity for emigration. Of temporary emigrants there is no lack. The inrush of coolies from Upper India during the cold-weather months, which has been noticed as occurring in other districts of Bengal, is seen here. Labourers from Midnapore and Chota Nagpur make annual trips to the 24-Parganas, and the same classes in Nadia and Jessore invade Khulna at harvest-time to assist in getting in the rice.

Emigration.

84. The excise revenue in this Division offers a means of gauging the growth of industrial rather than of agricultural prosperity. Of a total of Rx. 311,672 in 1891-92, Rx. 227,498 was realized from the city of Calcutta, where the incidence is Rs. 3-5-4 per head. The collections in 1881-82 were Rx. 245,840, showing an increase of Rx. 65,832 in the interval. Of this, however, Rx. 55,892 represent the growth of excise revenue in Calcutta, where it has not been found possible to impose the restrictions on the manufacture and vend of spirits, which have been introduced in the provinces. The increased collections in Calcutta are spread over every exciseable article; but the largest ratio is seen in ganja, the revenue from which doubled during the last ten years. The operatives in the numerous mills and factories are large consumers of the drug, and all the spirit and opium vendors' best customers; and the large development of excise revenue in the capital, though partly due to heavier rates of taxation, indicates the growth of wealth there. The revenue from the sale of foreign spirits in Calcutta was nearly the same in 1891-92 as ten years earlier. The importations of this stuff, a good deal of which is distilled in Germany from potatoes, beet and refuse sugar, amounted to 295,000 gallons in 1887-88 and to 291,000 in 1891-92. The cause of the inelasticity of the revenue from imported spirits is said by the Customs authorities to be the comparatively light taxation of the home-made article. This, however, cannot be the case, for consumers of cheap imported liquor are mainly drawn from the middle classes, who are restrained from frequenting the outstill by fear of social degradation. Other factors are at work. There is a growing distaste for strong drinks among Muhammadans, the outcome of the strictness of moral rule now maintained by the sectaries: and 203,173 of the population of Calcutta are followers of the Prophet. And, in spite of the asseverations to the contrary, so often made by enthusiasts for "temperance," there is no doubt that drunkenness has decreased amongst educated Hindus, who 10 or 15 years back were greatly given to that vice.

Excise.

V.—WESTERN BENGAL.

The Burdwan Division.

85. The western districts of Bengal Proper are included in the Burdwan Division. They are, Burdwan, Hooghly, Howrah, Bankura, Birbhum, and Midnapore, with an area of 13,956 square miles, and a population of 7,688,818, or 551 to the square mile. Physically the Division has far greater variety than the tracts which I have been describing. The eastern portion, including Hooghly with Howrah, and the east of the other districts, forms part of that vast alluvial plain, the slow formation of silt carried down into the Bay of Bengal by the Ganges, the Brahmaputra, and the Meghna with their tributaries. The western half of Burdwan, Bankura, Birbhum, and Midnapore forms a connecting link between the plain of Bengal and the mountainous region of Chota Nagpur. This part belongs to an immeasurably older geological era than the plains of Bengal proper. The soil is decomposed laterite, with deposits of nodulous limestone, resting on a rocky basis. Vast plains, green in their season with paddy, and interspersed with swamps and effete water-courses, give place to undulations from which rocks crop out, studded with boulders and scrubby jungle. The south of the Midnapore district resembles the Sundarbans. It is strictly maritime, subject to tidal waves and inroads of the sea. It is evident that a tract so diversified must afford a vast variety of social and agricultural problems.

Geography.

86. Taken as a whole, these districts are not so well provided with water-carriage as the rest of Bengal. The eastern or deltaic portion, indeed, has the Bhagirathi river, which lower in its course becomes the Hooghly, the Damodar, the Rupnarain, and other streams navigable by native craft throughout the year. Among artificial water-courses, we have the Midnapore high-level irrigation and navigation canal, 48 miles in length, which was constructed in 1873. It connects the

Communications.

Rupnarain, Damodar and Hooghly, and has cost up to the end of 1890-91, Rx. 824,424. The area irrigated by this great work in that year was 81,626 acres, the income from water rates Rx. 11,543. As a navigable channel it was traversed by 45,045 craft of a gross tonnage of 416,804, carrying goods worth Rx. 1,483,339 and paying Rx. 12,805 as tollage. After a long struggle with financial failure the canal is at last self-supporting, its net revenue for the three years ending 1890-91 having averaged Rx. 3,615. The northern and eastern parts of the Division are well served by the East Indian Railway, 223 miles of which lie within its boundaries. A new line has been constructed during the decade, 22 miles in length, connecting the main line with Tarakeswar, a sacred shrine of the Hooghly district. This venture has proved a complete success, and should serve to encourage the construction of similar railways in crowded tracts. Including 12 miles of the Azimganj Branch Railway, the total mileage of railway lines is 257 miles, or one to 54 square miles of area. There were at the close of 1890-91 1,154 miles of metalled and bridged and 1,822 miles of unmetalled roads, or 2,976 miles altogether, one to 4·71 square miles.

87. The course of trade in the Burdwan Division is largely determined by the railways and canals. The total exports by railway from these districts were in 1890-91 1,126,000 tons, the imports 237,700 tons, making a total of 1,363,700 tons. Rice is the chief article of export. In spite of a partial failure of the great winter crop, 218,700 tons were sent in 1891-92 from the districts of Burdwan, Birbhum and Bankura. Midnapore sent 86,869 tons by canal, and a vast and unknown quantity by river. Wheat, pulse and potatoes are exported to a large amount. The receipts of hides at Howrah from these districts has increased of late years, 27,000 skins only having been thus exported in 1889-90 and 60,000 in 1891-92. The other exports included 13,300 tons of lime, and nearly 993,000 tons of coal and coke. The production of cotton and silk goods, jute products, paper, shellac, brassware and indigo for export will be treated under the head of manufactures.

Trade.

The imports include salt, English piece-goods, tobacco and kerosine; but statistics are available only for one district. These show a marked increase in the amount of tobacco and salt, indicating an improvement in the material condition of the people.

88. That this should be the case, in spite of indifferent harvests in succession, argues well for rural resource. The year 1891-92 was one of specially deficient rainfall. Taking 100 as representing an average crop, we have the following figures for the principal harvests of this division:—

Crops.

Wheat	... 62	Early rice	... 75	Sugarcane	... 81
Pulses	... 62	Winter rice	... 81	Cold-weather crops	... 69

89. Thus the harvests, all round, were at least 25 per cent. below the normal. Some compensation to the agriculturist is to be found in the higher range of prices. Wheat sold at 21lb per rupee in 1889-90, 19lb in 1890-91, and 18lb in 1891-92. Similar figures for rice are 34, 34 and 26, and for pulses 32, 33, and 30.

Prices.

90. The pressure of revenue and cesses on the land is greater in Burdwan than elsewhere. In 1760 Mir Kasim, Subadar of Bengal, ceded to us the three districts of Chittagong, Midnapore and Burdwan, as price of his elevation at the expense of his father-in-law Mir Jaffar. Burdwan then included the present districts of Hooghly, Howrah and Bankura, and was held by one of the great feudatories of the Nizamat, the hereditary Maharaja of Burdwan, whose rights as zamindar remained unaffected by the transfer. He, however, became involved in debts, and during the interval between 1760 and the decennial settlement, which was made permanent in 1793, the history of this Division was one of constant struggle on our part to secure the punctual payment of revenue, and constant attempts on that of this great noble to evade his obligations. The Burdwan district, except the wilder portion on the west, was then tolerably well peopled and cultivated, and its resources were accurately known. Having to deal, as we had, with one instead of hundreds of zamindars, the framers of the Permanent Settlement were able to form a fair estimate of the assets. Hence the State demand in regard to revenue bears a much larger proportion to the collections of rent in these districts than elsewhere. In Burdwan Proper the revenue and cesses are Rs. 2-7-3 per head of the population and Re. 1-15-7 per acre. Hooghly is quite as heavily taxed. Bankura alone is below the average. The other districts, in view of their circumstances and the large area of waste land in some of them, are almost as highly assessed. The demand in respect of revenues and cesses for the Division is 14 annas 9 pie per head of the population, and 15 annas 10 pie per acre of area.

Land revenue.

91. The Permanent Settlement substituted a *régime* of law for bickerings and violent measures; but the heavy assessments and the cast-iron sale provisions, caused great hardship to all classes, and have not been without their effect in depressing the cultivators' lot. Things were not improved for the raiyat, when 20 years or thereabout, after the Permanent Settlement, an astute Maharaja invented a system of permanent sub-infeudation. He parcelled out his vast estates into tenures known as *patni taluks*, the grantees of which not only gave him a high premium, but covenanted to pay an annual rental in perpetuity, which, in every case, largely exceeded the Government demand. This system, which left him a mere annuitant on the land, was recognized by law in 1819, and a power of sale precisely similar to that possessed by Government was given to the patnidars. The latter stretched a point and again sublet on similar conditions, until estates are continually found with three or four families battening on the raiyats' toil. This pernicious system, which robs the zamindar of all interest

Landlord and tenant.

in the improvement of his nominal estate, and has created a swarm of drones living miserably on small fixed incomes, has spread to all parts of Bengal in the 73 years which have elapsed since it was legally recognized. Happily it has never taken root in Bihár; but in the central districts these patni taluks have played an adverse part in determining the raiyat's economic condition. The subdivision of property here is very extensive. There are 161,657 estates on the roll, exclusive of those of which Government is the proprietor, giving an average area of 55 acres to each.

Income-tax.

92. The incidence of the income-tax is as light as elsewhere; and unpopular as it is, it cannot be said to bear heavily on the vast volume of trade. The total demand is only Rx. 19,517, realized from 8,896 assessees, one in 890 of the population. The demand per each assessee was Rs. 22. The relations of landlord and tenant here are not marked with the friction which we have seen prevailing in parts of North and East Bengal. Tenants have for the most part rights of occupancy, and the only serious conflicts with the zamindars hinges on the question of the payment of a premium on transfer of such rights. Claims to hold rent-free give occasion to trouble at times, but on the whole the value of the Tenancy Act is not as yet understood as in other districts.

Salt laws.

93. The salt laws are not without their influence in the Midnapore district, the southern part of which was one of the great seats of this manufacture till the latter was killed by imports from Europe. A fall has taken place in 1891-92 in the consumption in that which is called the saliferous tract. The average consumption per head fell from 6lb 13 oz. to 6lb 9 oz. The average in similar tracts in the rest of Bengal is 11lb 14 oz. 15 dwt: so that the people of the southern portion of this district would seem to be half as well off as those of the eastern districts. This is not strictly true, for smuggling and illicit manufacture are rifer in Midnapore than elsewhere, but the fact that the consumption was fairly satisfactory in the first quarter of 1891-92, and decreased progressively during the rest of the year, may be taken as an indication of distress or at least of narrowed spending power. It is a curious fact that the consumption of salt in saliferous tracts, with the sole exception of Midnapore, is larger than that which is observed in tracts dependent on the imported article. The consumption in the eastern and the central districts, with a sea-board, is 11lb 14 oz. 15 dwt. as compared with 10lb 8 oz. 5 dwt. annually consumed in non-saliferous tracts.

Excise.

94. The excise, on the other hand, which the greater mixture of aboriginal blood in the inhabitants renders of greater value here than in the eastern districts as a test of agricultural prosperity, shows a satisfactory rate of progress. Collections in this Division in 1886-87 were Rx. 106,438, while in 1891-92 they had risen to Rx. 113,292, an increase more than 6 per cent. The incidence of voluntary taxation per head of the population is still only two annas six pies.

Waste land.

95. The area of waste land is no criterion of the progress of Burdwan; for a very large portion of the west is, and must remain for years to come, uncultivated. This tract is undulating and picturesque, with portions clad in scrub jungle; but the soil is shallow and the rainfall scanty, and this vast area could only be made to yield crops at a prohibitive charge for cultivation. This including houses, the portion occupied by swamps and river, is 3,757,354 out of a total of 8,927,360 acres. The eastern parts of this Division belong to the alluvial formation, and are still dotted with vast swamps covered with effete river beds. Three great drainage schemes are in progress in this tract, and the total cost which they will involve is estimated at Rx. 201,900. A fourth is still under the consideration of the Public Works Department. The area which will thus be reclaimed is not far short of 100,000 acres.

Canals.

96. Irrigation in this Division goes hand in hand with drainage. The area irrigated by the Midnapore canal is 81,626 acres, the water-rate income Rx. 11,543. The Eden irrigation canal is increasing in popularity, the area treated having sprung up in one year from 1,129 to 10,430 acres. The natural and other advantages of the Burdwan Division are admittedly inferior to those of the central and eastern districts. There is a larger area of uncultivable land, and rents are artificially raised by excessive sub-infeudation. This being so, it is not a little curious to find an increase in population during the last decade.

Census, 1891.

The figures for 1881 were 7,393,954; those for 1891 7,688,818, a growth of 294,864, or 3·9 per cent. in ten years. This was very unequally distributed. The Burdwan district showed a small decrease, and Bankura and Birbhum are nearly stationary. But Midnapore, where there is more poverty than in the other districts, showed an increase of 115,951, or nearly 5 per cent.; Hooghly one of 6 per cent., and the metropolitan district of Hooghly, of no less than 13 per cent. It is probable that the next census may show a less sustained rate of increase, for the year 1891-92 was exceptionally unhealthy.

Public health.

The short rainfall deteriorated a water-supply which, dependent as it is on open tanks and sewage-polluted wells, is never satisfactory. The mortality from cholera was, however, less than that of the entire Province, having been 2·08 as against 3·26 in Bengal. The death-rate from fever, too, was considerably below the general average. It stood in 1891-92 at 18·19, which, though very high from an English standpoint, was ·75 beneath that of the Province from this cause. On the whole, the standard of health is higher in Midnapore than in the Central Districts: a fact due to the comparatively light pressure of population.

Education.

97. In an educational point of view, the Burdwan Division has many advantages. There are 10,918 schools with 270,000 scholars, one school to 1·28 of the area, and a pupil to every 2·5 boys of a school-going age.

Burdwan indeed excels every division of the Province in the number of its schools and the children under instruction, but the progress has been less than elsewhere during the decade. In 1881-82 there were 10,398 schools attended by 230,484 pupils, and the relative advance of other divisions has been far greater. High education is developing fast, while the number of girls attending school has nearly trebled.

Rural well-being.

98. The present time is as unfavourable here as in other parts of the Province for gauging the normal material condition of the people. Poor harvests for three successive years have done much to deplete agricultural resources, and, though in the case of actual tillers of the soil their effects were to some extent neutralized by high prices, yet other classes must have suffered a considerable diminution of their purchasing power. But there was no indication of famine, no converging of the labouring population in centres of industry, such as the Hooghly mills and their Raniganj coal-fields. There have in fact been no marked signs of want, no serious check to the tide of prosperity. It varies of course generally in different parts. The alluvial districts have greater facilities for carriage. Their proximity to the capital gives them better markets, and the malarial fever which has prevailed there for 22 years has kept down population, and so relieved the pressure on land.

I will proceed to analyze the budgets of the agricultural classes in different parts. A village in the laterite or northern portion of the district, contains ten families of cultivators of eight members apiece. The average area held is five acres, producing per acre in ordinary years 3,680lb of rice, worth Rs. 46, and 16 bundles of straw, worth Rs. 4-8. The produce from five acres is thus Rs. 252-8. The females husk rice for their wealthier neighbours, thus earning Rs. 12 per annum. They never work in the fields, but assist in such operations as threshing and winnowing if carried on in the dwelling-house yard. The total income of a cultivator of this class will therefore be Rs. 264-8. His out-goings are food, including fuel, pulse, oil, and salt, Rs. 120. The ordinary scale of diet is 2lb of rice per adult male, 1½lb per female, and 1lb per child. This is boiled and eaten with two ounces of boiled pulse and condiments, in two meals, taken at midday and sunset. Breakfast consists of a little parched rice only. Clothing Rs. 15. This, in the case of males, consists of a *dhuti* or waist-cloth, generally of European make, a *gamcha* or scarf, which also serves as turban, costing 12 annas and 4 annas respectively; so much is obligatory in all classes. But a cultivator of the upper rank will also indulge in a *pirán* or shirt costing Re. 1-6, and a Manchester *chadar* (sheet) worn toga-wise, eight annas, a pair of leather shoes worth Re. 1-2, and an English umbrella Re. 1-4. The total equipment on the former scale stands a raiyat in only Re. 1, and he need have but two "suits" a year. The latter, which is also the garb of the lower middle class, will cost less than Rs. 4 annually. A female of this class wears a long strip of Manchester or mill-made cloth, named a *sari*, wrapped round her person from head to foot. Its price is Re. 1 to Re. 1-8. Rent of land. Rs. 17-8. Rents are very high in this Division, a fact due in some measure to the extensive sub-infeudation that prevails. Land which in the northern districts would not be charged more than Rs. 3-12 per acre here fetches Rs. 4-8. Wages of labourers employed in emergent seasons such as reaping time, Rs. 5. The present rates are 10lb of paddy, equivalent to rather more than 6lb of cleaned rice, and worth 4 annas per diem, plus food. Repairs of implements, purchase of bullocks (four are kept, price Rs. 10 each), social and religious ceremonies, Rs. 25. Total out-goings Rs. 182-8. A raiyat of this class should therefore have a surplus of Rs. 82 at the year's end, but unfavourable seasons, litigation, and extravagant expenditure on ceremonies leave him very little. At the same time it must be observed that the cultivators of this Division are not serfs of the money-lenders, as too many are in the central districts. Money-lenders exist, but their clients are people of a higher stratum, the large middle class with interests on land to dispose of. The disappearance of the money-lender was noticed by Sir W. Hunter in his monumental *Gazetteer* published 20 years ago: and it is still more complete at the present day. In another part of the district 71·3 acres were found in the occupation of 31 families averaging nearly four members apiece; the average holding was 2·3 acres, the produce 3,400lb of paddy worth Rs. 74, straw Rs. 10, sugarcane and pulses Rs. 9. Besides, the women earned rice worth Rs. 12 by paddy husking. The gross income was thus Rs. 105, and the out-goings by way of rent, cesses, and cost of cultivation, Rs. 32-8. Thus the net income was Rs. 72-8. Assuming the family to consist of one adult male, a female, and two children, and a daily scale of 1½lb rice per adult male, 1lb per female and 12 ozs. per child, we get a total consumption of rice amounting to 1,460lb. This, at 31lb per rupee, (the average for three years) will cost Rs. 47; condiments, vegetables, salt, &c., will cost about Rs. 7, clothing Rs. 5, repairs to houses and implements, and all other expenses, will be at least Rs. 5, making a total of Rs. 64, and leaving a net balance of Rs. 8-8. It will be remarked that these people are rack-rented; there is no margin for bad seasons and for the cost of marriages and funeral rites, which cannot be omitted without social degradation. Hence it is not surprising to find a debt averaging Rs. 84 per family, or more than a year's income. This class uses brass eating vessels, and the females wear bracelets of the same metal, with a few trinkets of silver, the value of the whole being about Rs. 15.

II.—LANDLESS CLASSES.

Industries.

99. The proximity of the alluvial or eastern tract to Calcutta gives a great advantage to its artizan population. There are large jute mills employing about 30,000 operatives. Many of these are Biharis, and it is a fact that the postal remittances from this Division to one district alone, Gaya, average Rx. 30,000 annually. The outturn is not accurately known, but it is probably not less than 111,000 tons, worth Rx. 1,977,900. There has been a very marked revival of the jute

industry of recent years. The average wages are high, Rs. 9 to Rs. 9-8 per mensem, and a unskilled coolie can earn Rs. 7 with ease. Many hands from the neighbouring villages work for 21 days and idle for the rest of the month. Cotton mills are four in number, and turn out twists, yarn, and cloth, worth Rx. 600,000. This industry is languishing owing to low prices and excessive competition, but it is slowly killing that of the indigenous weavers. There was a recovery in the value of goods so manufactured in the Burdwan district, the outturn of native looms having risen from Rx. 65,000 to Rx. 100,000. This, however, is but a pause in the ebbing tide. Everywhere weavers are taking to cultivation, for by incessant toil they can earn no more than Rs. 5 per mensem by their craft. In one village weavers have turned their attention to the manufacturing of silk. The latter industry is still maintained in the Midnapore district, where several filatures under European management are still working. But here as elsewhere it is moribund. Silk and tasar cloth are made in Bankura and Birbhum. In the latter district the outturn of silk rose from 32,000 to 40,531lb, while tasar decreased in outturn and value. Coloured silk goods are made in parts of Burdwan and Hooghly, but, speaking generally, the people's taste for these wares is on the wane, and this beautiful industry is slowly perishing. Indigo is also made in Midnapore, Bankura and Burdwan. The total outturn in 1891-92 was only 162,800lb, a decline of 25 per cent. in three years: so that this once important manufacture is within measurable distance of extinction. Indigo is not, and can never be, a paying crop for the raiyat: and the planter can induce him to cultivate it only if he gilds the bitter pill by allowing him to hold lands fit for other crops below the market rates. The introduction of new and more lucrative staples, and the substitution of a reign of law for patriarchal methods have well nigh killed indigo. Large classes are suffering by the transfer of wealth thus entailed, for the planters brought a good deal of money into the district, and spent it freely.

This Division has a unique manufacture of iron goods. The Barakar works, formerly the property of Government, are now exploited by a Company with a capital of Rx. 150,000; they employ 826 labourers and turned out 11,822 tons of iron goods, worth Rx. 61,300, in 1891-92. There are four foundries in Howrah, which is virtually the "Surrey side" of Calcutta, and the aggregate annual outturn is Rx. 214,500. These works employ large numbers of men at high wage rates. In a village of Burdwan, blacksmiths temper steel and manufacture guns; and iron safes are made in a village of the Howrah district. The Raniganj collieries are known throughout the length and breadth of India, and their produce has largely ousted the superior but dearer product of South Wales, which formerly had a monopoly on steamers and railways. The exports by rail in 1890-91, the last year for which figures are available, was 993,000 tons, worth Rx. 1,005,700. Paper is made on a large scale at a mill on the English system near Howrah. The outturn is now Rx. 150,376, an increase of nearly 50 per cent. in three years. So successful has been this venture that another mill has started during the year in the Burdwan district with a capital of Rx. 70,000. The outturn was Rx. 40,000 in value. This industry has nearly destroyed that of the native paper makers, who produced a thick, highly glazed, ill-coloured article at double the price which the English mills charge for an infinitely superior article. A vast amount of distress has been caused by their displacement, but the public at large have gained. Pottery (tiles and piping) is made in the Burdwan district by a European firm which employ 1,100 men, and rope to the extent of Rx. 65,000 at Howrah. The indigenous manufactures which need notice are brass and bell-metal ware, for which there is a vast and increasing demand, and lac which is declining.

100. On the whole the industries of this Division are important and flourishing, and no skilled workman need starve. Many of them are the creation of the decade under review, and all have gained a great development during its course. The wages of skilled labour differ very considerably. A mason earns 4 to 7 annas per diem in the Burdwan district, and the tendency is upwards. In Bankura he makes no more than 5 annas, and in Midnapore 4½ annas are gladly taken. In Howrah a mason gets 8 annas, and in Birbhum 10 annas per diem. Similarly the wages of a skilled carpenter vary between 5 and 12 annas, and those of a blacksmith between 5 annas and Re. 1. Rates are, as might be expected, highest in the neighbourhood of great manufacturing centres: but everywhere they are determined rather by custom than by the cost of living. Artizans are in special demand in Burdwan, and a really first-class carpenter was found who made Rs. 360 per annum. An enquiry in the Midnapore district as to the means of 96 artizan families (potters, weavers, goldsmiths, carpenters, and blacksmiths) revealed the fact that potters made Rs. 10 per mensem, weavers Rs. 7-8, and the rest about Rs. 7. These, however, were rude workmen in a remote village. Speaking generally, the demand for the artizan class in Burdwan exceeds the supply, and artificers who are only tolerably industrious earn as much and live as well as carpenters of the upper class.

Artizans.

101. Labourers are in great demand throughout this Division. The census numbers of these classes are as follow:—

Labourers.

Burdwan	...	...	...	42,280
Bankura	...	...	...	119,808
Birbhum	...	...	...	46,627
Midnapore	...	...	...	28,769
Hooghly	...	...	...	18,490
Howrah	...	...	...	45,973
		Total	...	301,867

These figures, however, in Bankura, Birbhum, and Howrah, certainly include the lower class of cultivators with holdings of one acre and less, who eke out the profits from their land by serving as day-labourers at ploughing and harvest time. The fact that day-labourers can always get work, and command not less than 4 annas per diem, except in parts of Midnapore, where wages are found to be lower, proves that their lot is at least on a par with that of the middle class cultivator. A man can live and support a family on three annas per diem: and in point of fact it is impossible to distinguish between the two classes of farmer and labourer in the matter of food, eating vessels and ornaments. Colliers employed in the Raniganj mines form a class apart. They are mostly men of the same race as the natives of the neighbouring Division of Chota Nagpur. Their earnings are large; as much as Rs. 10 and Rs. 12 per mensem—a fact which would never be suspected from their externals, which are sordid in the extreme. Their women are, however, loaded with brass ornaments, which they value far above rubies. Eating vessels of the same material are exclusively used; and last, not least, they are the great patrons of the liquor shops.

Beggars.

102. The class that lives by begging in the western districts is about one-half per cent. of the population. It is a heterogeneous one. The section consisting of religious mendicants are well off. Their houses visited in the Burdwan district showed a high standard of comfort and even of luxury. The majority of beggars are, however, old women, cripples, blind and lepers. Most of these have relatives, and in such cases their wants must be supplied, partially at least, under the severest social penalty. At the same time it is this limited class that first feels the adverse effect of high prices. As in the central districts, this section of the community must be narrowly watched in times when necessaries are dear.

Urban population.

103. The urban population of Burdwan is comparatively large. There are 14 towns with more than 10,000 inhabitants. Howrah, the principal one, has a census population of 116,600. Its increase in the decade was 11,400. It is virtually a suburb of Calcutta, and as it is the terminus of the East Indian Railway, and a great centre of manufactures, the lower classes have ample occupation. Serampore, after a long period of decay, has thrown out fresh shoots. The population rose from 25,559 in 1881 to 35,952. It is becoming a centre of the jute manufacture. Burdwan, the ancient seat of the Maharajas of that name, is nearly stationary at 34,447. Hooghly shows a trifling increase, and has now 33,060 inhabitants: but Midnapore has declined from 33,560 to 32,264, the result of its growing unhealthiness. These towns are administrative centres, and have few interests except those connected with the Courts.

Emigration.

104. Where the local demand for labour is so active and constant, there is but little field for emigration. Raniganj, in the Burdwan district, is a head-quarters for registering foreign emigrants; but those who present themselves are mostly inhabitants of Chota Nagpur and the Sonthal Parganas. The registrations are on the decline—a fact attributable to the increase in free emigration. The numbers are 2,100 annually. Nearly all are bound for the tea districts, the number of colonial emigrants in 1891-92 having been 180. Temporary emigrants are found in vast numbers. The inhabitants of Midnapore proceed yearly to the 24-Parganas and Khulna for the purpose of assisting in harvesting operations. Sonthals have lately taken to settling in the Birbhum district, where they are greatly valued as tenants. It is greatly to be wished that emigration were more active in parts of this Division, especially Midnapore, where the standard of well-being is comparatively low.

VI.—CHOTA NAGPUR.

Geography.

105. The Chota Nagpur Division is identical, geographically and ethnologically, with the western half of Burdwan. The fertile flats of the Gangetic valley here give place to mountainous ridges, peaks covered with primæval jungle, and long stretches of upland yielding comparatively meagre crops. A portion of Manbhum and Singhbhum is indeed a continuation of the alluvial tract, but the Division as a whole is part of the vast central plateau, which forms, so to speak, the backbone of India. Except in the two districts mentioned, where Hindu emigrants preponderate, this tract is peopled by aboriginal races, whose physique and character offer a marked contrast to those of the Aryan races. The Division includes the British districts of Hazáribágh, Lohardaga, Manbhum, Singhbhum and Palámau, with an area of 26,966 square miles, and a census population of 4,628,792. To the west of British territory lie the Tributary States of Chota Nagpur, with an area of 16,054 square miles and a population of 883,359. These figures give the extremely low proportion of 171 inhabitants to the square mile. Nearly three-fourths of the Division consist of barren upland and primæval forests, and it contains a larger portion of uncultivated land than any other area of similar size in the province. The portion under tillage is only 6,925,329 acres as compared with 10,332,211 acres of waste.

Waste lands.

Communications.

106. The communications of this Division are far inferior to those of others to the east. There are 2,799 miles of roads including village tracks, of which 569 miles are metalled. Thus there is a mile of road to 9·33 square miles of area, and this in a land where water carriage is not available. The river system is useless for purposes of commerce, for all the streams are fordable in the dry weather; while the rocky nature of their beds, the rapidity of their currents, and the liability to freshets, render navigation impossible during the rains. The inconvenience to trade resulting from the rudimentary state of communications has been lately

remedied, to some extent, by the construction of the Bengal-Nagpur Railway. Leaving the East Indian system at Assansol, seven miles from the boundary of the Chota Nagpur Division, it traverses it from east to west. At Bilaspur, in the Central Provinces, 106 miles from the western boundary, this line bifurcates, one branch leading to Nagpur, the capital of those provinces, and the other joining the Great Indian Peninsula Railway at Kutri below Allahabad and Jabalpur. Thus the Division is placed in direct communication with the vast wheat-producing tracts and cultivable wastes of the Central Provinces, as well as with Upper India. It is also traversed by that which must in the near future be the mail route between Calcutta and Bombay. Unfortunately the means at the disposal of the district authorities do not permit them developing the system of feeder roads, without which the utility of railways is much circumscribed. An enormous amount of traffic now finds its way into the south of the Division from Midnapore and the Native States, and the few district roads are in a deplorable state. One of the most pressing wants of this vast tract is roads bringing traffic to the railway, their sandy and loamy portions metalled and provided with "dip" bridges over the numerous rivers and water-courses they cross, east and south of the Division. The new line has diverted a large portion of the Lohardaga trade from Hazáribágh and Singhbhum to Purulia. The imports by road from that district have quadrupled in a single year, and now stand at 19,000 tons. They include salt, cotton goods, tobacco, gram and pulses, crude sugar, and brassware. The total exports by rail from the districts of this Division rose at a bound from 4,670 tons in 1889-90 to 29,900 in the following year; and the imports increased from 2,600 to 16,900 tons. It is especially gratifying to note a marked increase in imports of salt into Manbhum, the figures being 14,000 tons in 1891-92, as compared with 9,200 during the previous year. The exports are rice and hides, in which a marked increase occurred during ten years; lac and cocoons, the traffic in which is declining; oilseeds and timber. The development of the latter trade is one of the most striking evidences of increased activity. In 1890-91, 400 logs were exported, while the number rose to 5,500 in the succeeding year. The mechanism for recording the movement of goods here is even more defective than elsewhere, and it would be of little use to give further statistics. The Division is an extraordinary instance of India, past and present, in the matter of traffic. The west and north are still very self-contained, transporting their products laboriously by pack-bullocks, carts, and coolies over inferior roads to a few main markets, and deriving in return the few humble luxuries they need; while the east and south are rapidly developing all resources under the stimulus of the railway. The construction of roads connecting the isolated north with the Gaya State Railway is essential. The fact that the imports of salt, and of articles not of prime necessity, such as tobacco and brassware, are increasing, argues well for the staying power of the people.

Trade.

They have, indeed, been severely tried. The rainfall of 1891-92 was scanty and unevenly distributed. Its early cessation at the end of September reduced the rice crop by nearly 25 per cent., except in the district of Singhbhum, where rice was about the average; while the absence of rain in June, and its excess in the following months, injured the Indian corn and other inferior grains, which are here the cultivator's main subsistence, and are known by the generic name of *bhadoi*. Then the long drought between September and February well-nigh ruined the cold-weather crops—wheat, oilseeds, and pulses. On the other hand the *mahua* tree, whose flowers are a staple article of diet with the lower classes, yielded fairly, ranging from 65 in Manbhum to 100 in Hazáribágh. Taking 100 as representing an average crop, we have the following figures representing the year's harvests for the past three years:—

Crops.

Wheat	...	54	Winter rice	...	87
Pulses	...	68	Sugarcane	...	75
Early rice	...	81	Cold-weather crops	...	56

Thus the returns for the last three years have uniformly been below normal.

107. Nor was the cultivating class consoled for comparatively low returns by proportionate rise in prices. Owing to deficient communications and the thinness of population, prices are lower here than in the districts further east. Wheat sold at 28lbs. per rupee in 1889-90, at 29lbs. in 1890-91, and at 20lbs. in 1891-92. Similar figures for rice are 35, 34 and 31, and for pulses 32 throughout the period. The tendency is, however, upwards, and large exports by rail are an important factor in determining it.

Prices.

108. Half the population is composed of non-Aryan tribes, the principal being the Kols, Hos, and Larkas, whose savage bravery under their numerous Chiefs, aided by the physical difficulties of the country, rendered any settled government impossible while Bengal was under native rule. The Division passed into British hands on the acquisition of the Dewani in 1761, and Manbhum was occupied permanently before 1770. In other parts a fierce and prolonged resistance was offered by the tribesmen, and it was not till 1854 that the administration was organized in its present system, which is one differing in many respects from that in force in the west of Bengal. Chota Nagpur is what is called a "non-regulation" Division, with its own legal and fiscal organization; the Commissioner has larger powers than his colleagues in regulation districts, and the place of District Judge is filled by a Judicial Commissioner. The administration of civil and criminal justice centres in a Deputy Commissioner at the head of each district. Hazáribágh, Palámau and parts of Manbhum are permanently settled; but the greater portion of the remainder of this vast territory is either

Land revenue.

treated as a Government estate, and settled for varying terms of years, or remains in the hands of native chiefs, from whom the Government realizes a trifling revenue. In no part of Bengal do imposts press more lightly than in these districts. There are but 143 permanently-settled estates on the roll, though many are of vast extent. The number of tenures is 2,158. The gross revenue from land, including roads and public works cesses, is Rx. 68,000, being only annas 2·4 per head of the population, and 8 pies per acre of area.

Income tax.

109. The assessees to income-tax are 4,311, and the total demand Rx. 9,485. Thus there is one assessee to 1,073 of the population, and each pays no more than Rs. 21-5-10 on the average. Such taxation is nominal, and has but little effect in diminishing the resources of the people.

Landlord and tenant.

110. The Tenancy Act has not been extended to this Division, but the relations between zamindars and raiyats seem to require some such measure. They are described as an "armed peace," varied by an attitude of open warfare. The consequent litigation and general unrest hamper the administration, and retard the progress of this very backward tract: for such, in an educational point of view, is Chota Nagpur. The number of primary schools has indeed risen from 499 with 28,941 scholars in 1881-82 to 1,771 with 49,136 scholars in 1891-92. But the ratio of schools to population is still only 1 in 2,500, and that of scholars to boys of school-going age 10 per cent. The best feature in the ten years' educational history is the development of female instruction. The number of girls attending school has risen from 368 to 3,457.

Education.

Public health.

111. That Chota Nagpur should show a substantial increase in population during the last 10 years is not surprising. If, on the one hand, we have a comparative infertility of soil and a low standard of civilization such as always characterizes aboriginal races, on the other hand we find a light pressure of population and a degree of immunity from epidemic disease which is unknown on the Gangetic delta. The recorded mortality from fever in 1881 was 12·65 per mille; while in Bengal as a whole it averaged 14·23. Ten years later the figures had risen to 15·93 as compared with 18·94 for Bengal. Owing to the defective mechanism for registration no absolute reliance can be placed on these figures, but they afford a basis of comparison. There can be no doubt that laterite and mountain tracts are healthier than alluvial formations, and thus one of the great checks on redundant population is less operative in Chota Nagpur than in Bengal Proper. The recorded mortality in 1891 from all causes was 23·01 as compared with 26·94 for all Bengal. The year, however, is hardly a representative one; for owing to a deficiency in rainfall fever was unusually prevalent. And then an influenza epidemic swept over the country and proved as fatal here as it is in other lands where aboriginal races were concerned. Cholera, on the other hand, is less fatal here than in the rest of Bengal. The ratio per mille in 1891 was but 1·02, while that for the province was 3·26.

Census results, 1891.

Rural well-being.

112. Hence the population of this Division rose from 4,225,989 in 1881 to 4,628,792 in 1891—a growth of 402,803, or 9·6 per cent. The increase is pretty evenly distributed over each district. The enquiries made in 1888 fully bear out the prosperity then indicated. In Manbhum, the most advanced district, the circumstances of 550 families were analyzed, 277 of them, or 50·4 per cent., being those of cultivators. The average number in a family was 6; and rather more than 35 per cent. were wage-earners. The measurement of land by a definite standard is unknown in the greater part of the Division, and in the absence of a regular survey it was not possible to estimate the area of the average holding. A middle-class farmer's gross income from agriculture was estimated at Rs. 65; the net income Rs 48-0-8. This, however, is exclusive of the produce of the homestead patch—chillies, tobacco and potatoes. No credit is given for jungle produce, which is to be had for the taking in most parts, and forms a large proportion of the diet of the lower classes Amongst the succedanea is the fruit of the *mahua* tree, used as a basis for the extraction of spirits, and also consumed in a dried state. The caste prejudices of the cultivating class, too, largely influence their well-being. The aborigine derives a regular income from the sale of his pigs, fowls and goats, but the orthodox Hindu considers such dealings sinful. On the whole the money value of a cultivator's labour in the Manbhum district, so far as it can be estimated in cash, is not less than Rs. 70. His live-stock is generally four bullocks and a cow, worth Rs. 50, and his indebtedness Rs. 54. Here we have a coincidence that is not accidental, and it fully bears out my position, derived from a study of the circumstances of the central and western districts, that the degree of a cultivator's indebtedness depends less on his necessities than on the security he is able to offer. Two hundred and forty families out of 277 were never without two good meals per diem. The average consumption of coarse grain—for rice is a luxury here—is 3,360lbs. annually, or 11b. 8 ounces per head daily; the average quantity of salt consumed by a family of this class is 112lbs. per annum, or 18·6lbs per head, as compared with 10lbs. 8 ounces 5 dwts. in all Bengal. Every family but one was found to use brass vessels for eating, the average weight being 30lbs. In Singhbhum the standard is nearly as high, but indebtedness is greater; five-eighths of the agricultural class are hopelessly involved. Their mainstay is the winter rice crops, which ripen in December. After paying rent and cesses and refunding the grain borrowed from the money-lender with interest at 50 per cent., the cultivator can live comfortably on the balance till March. Thenceforward, till the *bhadoi* crops, early rice, millet, and other coarse grains, ripen in September he would find it difficult to exist but for the resource of *mahua* flowers and jungle produce. In the great Government estate known as the Kolhan,

the inhabitants of which are aboriginal Kols, we find a more primitive organization and a higher standard of comfort. Money is rare, and clothes, live-stock and luxuries are obtained by trade. Rice-beer, to which the Kols are immoderately attached, is homebrewed; tobacco is afforded by the homestead patch, and clothing is the product of village looms. Gold and silver are despised, and barbaric brass ornaments alone in use by their women-folk. Marriage and social expenses do not drain their resources as in the case of Bengal Proper. One cow and Rs. 7 in cash is considered as a fair price to pay for a wife. Their houses are large and substantially built, and brass is everywhere replacing earthenware for eating purposes. Hazáribágh resembles Manbhum in domestic economy, and the only point of interest is the fact elicited by actual enumeration that 369 agriculturists owned 55 buffaloes, 325 bullocks, and 71 goats between them. Speaking generally, the condition of the agricultural class, in spite of their universal indebtedness, is an enviable one in Chota Nagpur. The pressure of population is light, the standard of wealth comparatively high, while rent and cesses are below the average.

Labourers.

II.—LANDLESS CLASSES.

113. The class of agricultural labourers is a large one in Chota Nagpur. The last census returns show for—

Hazáribágh	...	...	...	52,890
Lohardaga	...	...	...	13,475
Manbhum	...	...	...	262,809
Singhbhum	...	...	...	9,180
				338,354

In Manbhum they form 22 per cent. of the population. The enquiry in that district into the circumstances of 157 families of this class showed that 240 males and 115 females, were wage-earning members. They find employment during the greater portion of the year. The earnings were Rs. 24-10 from labour, and Rs. 4-8 from cultivation; total Rs. 29-2. This is exclusive of the jungle produce consumed, and the return from the pigs, fowls, and goats, which nearly every family maintains, the average value of which is put at Rs. 7. The gross earnings are not less than Rs. 40 per annum. 121 of the 157 families were never without two meals a day; the average weight of brass utensils in one case was rather more than 3lbs. The consumption of salt was 50lbs. per family averaging 4, or 12lbs. 8 ounces per head; the grain consumed 1,520lbs., or 1·04lbs. per head per diem. Sixty-one per cent. of this number were in debt to an average of Rs. 13 per family. The general conclusion arrived at was that one-fifth of the labouring class was well-to-do, and that the majority had to put up with a standard of living barely half as high as that of the average cultivator. The opening up of this district by the Bengal Nagpur Railway, which has taken place since the epoch of these enquiries, has brought a sensible amelioration in the labourer's lot: but with so large a class not far removed from penury, the condition of Manbhum is not altogether reassuring. In Palámau and Lohardaga the number of agricultural labourers is very limited. Cases in which families have less than ·66 acres are rare, and they are really better off than cultivators. In Hazáribágh the number of labourers is more considerable. The wage-rates are 6lbs. grain or 1 anna 6 pie in cash in the adult males; 4lbs. or one anna in that of females; and 3lbs. or 9 pies in that of children above seven. Thus an agricultural labourer with a wife and child of a wage-earning age would make 3 annas 3 pie per diem, or Rs. 64 per annum, supposing they were employed for three-fourths of the year. The cost of living and clothes is estimated at Rs. 15 per head in this class, so that a fair subsistence is earned by an average family. The possession of live-stock is not uncommon amongst them. 308 labourers, who had small patches of cultivation, owned 14 buffaloes, 122 bullocks, and 45 goats between them. But 144 landless labourers owned but 12 bullocks and 8 goats. Emigration, which will be treated of under its proper head, affords some relief to the labouring section of the community. The tea-gardens in Lohardaga and Hazáribágh also give pretty constant employment to large numbers at a wage of Rs. 3 per annum.

114. In view of the resources offered by jungle products, the labourer in Northern Chota Nagpur is not badly off. The prosperity of the artizan class depends largely on the development of manufacturing industry. The articles produced are lac, indigo, tea, soap-stone, bowls, ghee, tasar silk and cocoons, and hides. None of these industries are very important, and that of tea, which is in European hands, is certainly on the downward grade. Coal is found throughout the Division, and the collieries of Giridih are known throughout Bengal. Those in Hazáribágh and Manbhum showed a far smaller labour-list in 1891-92 than the previous year. Elsewhere, collieries under native management have been doing fairly well; but on the whole this important industry is still in a rudimentary stage in Chota Nagpur. Some reference is necessary to the extraordinary gold-fever which raged in Calcutta in 1890. The scene of the operations of prospectors was Lohardaga, Singhbhum, and Manbhum. It is estimated that nearly a million sterling has been wasted, as far as investors are concerned, in machinery, labour and premia for concessions, nine-tenths of which have proved utterly useless. In one case only, that of the Patkoom Mining Company, is crushing machinery at work on a commercial scale, but results have not as yet been encouraging. That gold exists in this

Manufactures.

Mines.

Division is unquestionable, but that it is to be found in paying quantities anywhere is rendered doubtful by the collapse of many companies and syndicates formed for prospecting purposes, and by the poor result of experimental crushing. Copper at one time promised to be a remunerative industry, but the failure of the Baragunda Mining Concern in Hazáribágh, which occurred in 1891, has thrown hundreds of operatives out of employ. Attempts are also being made to work silver, lead, and tin mines under European agency, but the Division is suffering from the reaction following the disappointment of the extravagant hopes raised in 1890.

Artizans.

115. The artizan class cannot be said to be much affected by the mining industry. Wages are low, and have remained constant for many years. Except in Singhbhum, where they have an upward tendency, masons earn 4 annas to 10 annas per diem according to their skill, carpenters 2 annas 10 pies to 10 annas, blacksmiths 3 annas to 10 annas, coolies 1 anna 6 pies to 3 annas per diem. It is noteworthy that wages of skilled labour are higher in the south and east than in the still isolated north and west. In this tract enquiries into the domestic arrangements of 100 artizans' families showed an average income of Rs. 35, but this is certainly an understatement. They held live-stock of the value of Rs. 9 per family, and owed Rs. 13 to money-lenders. Seventy-six per cent. were in the habit of taking two meals a day. The amount of salt consumed per head was about 13lbs., or more than the Provincial average. The consumption of food-grains averaged 1·1lb. per head per diem, and the weight of brass vessels was 9lbs. Hence artizans in southern Chota Nagpur are in point of comfort midway between the cultivators and agricultural labourers. In Singhbhum the oil-pressers were found to be the most numerous artizan class, and made a comfortable living. Carpenters and blacksmiths follow. They find difficulty in getting work during the months of September to December, and the latter have a bad reputation as thieves and burglars. In point of comfort they are no better off than agricultural labourers. Strange to say the weavers' occupation is not yet gone. Their coarse but lasting cloth is preferred to the product of Lancashire or German looms; and they earn Rs. 54 to Rs. 60 annually with ease. Speaking generally, the artizans in Chota Nagpur are not by any means so prosperous as in the districts further east.

The class which live by charity here is numerically insignificant, and does not require any special notice.

Emigration.

116. I have alluded to emigration as exercising a powerful influence on the labour market. The comparative poverty of the soil and the idiosyncracies of the aboriginal population, who have not that passionate attachment to the land exhibited by the Aryan race, predispose them to emigration. Those belonging to the Uraons and Mundua tribes are specially valued as labourers in the tea districts. Coolies for Assam are recruited under the restrictions imposed by Act I of 1882. The journey is a long and expensive one, and as the emigrant is bound for three or five years, he has a definite money value to the recruiter. Hence abuses of all kinds, the abduction of young married women and girls,—the most flagrant misrepresentations, and the use of drugs and intoxicants by agents. Coolies for service on plantations in the Duars, as the tract is called which separates Northern Bengal and Assam from the Himalayas, are recruited on what is called the "free system." They do not bind themselves for a term of years, and are neither protected by special laws nor necessarily registered. Such emigrants frequently return to their homes and re-engage more than once. The amount remitted to relatives or brought back by coolies themselves averages Rx. 10,000. The number registered under Act I of 1882 averages Rx. 8,000 per annum, and the total emigration, free and unregistered, 25,000.

VII.—ORISSA.

Geography.

117. Orissa geographically belongs rather to Madras than Bengal. A monsoon-beaten coast on one side, and a barrier of almost impenetrable hills on the other combine to isolate it as completely as Britain was cut off from the rest of the civilized world under the Roman Emperors These physical peculiarities have not been without their effect on the social development of Orissa. The Division comprises the three districts of Cuttack, Balasore and Puri, with an area of 9,853 square miles, and a population, at the last census, of 4,047,352, or 410 to the square mile. These districts line the sea-board, and shut out from the Bay of Bengal a high land tract, parcelled out into 19 Tributary States, extending over 14,387 square miles, and containing 1,696,710 inhabitants to the square mile. Cuttack and Balasore consist of three belts of country nearly parallel with the coast, and rising slowly as they recede from it. The first is a narrow maritime strip of marsh and jungle, new soil deposited by the silt-laden rivers from Central India and the sand-burdened currents of the Bay—saline regions, destitute of crops or inhabitants. The second is the delta proper, an alluvial plain of older formation, and of a level now fairly raised, teeming with inhabitants, and waving in the season with glorious harvests of rice. The third belt is a rocky and barren border land, gradually ascending into the wooded glens and mountains of the Tributary States, peopled by wild aboriginal tribes. Puri, the southernmost district of Orissa, has a coast of sandy ridges towards the Madras frontier, forming a long bare spit of land which divides the great Chilka lake from the ocean. Behind this barren strip lies a rich flat region of villages and rice fields, which rises in rocky undulations to meet the mountain ranges of the Tributary States. The rivers of Orissa play an important part in its economy. They pour down from the western highlands, laden with silt, which they deposit when their velocity is checked by the dead level

of the delta. Hence their beds are unable to carry off the water to the sea; and were it not for a vast system of embankments, floods would annually devastate the cultivated area. But these are not by any means the only enemies to cultivation in Orissa. It depends mainly on its rice crop, which ripens during the monsoon. It is not, therefore, the quantity of rain, which averages the respectable total of 56 inches, but its incidence which makes the difference between famine and plenty. In 1865 the monsoon ceased prematurely on the 14th September, and the following year was marked by a famine equalling in intensity the most disastrous recorded.

Canals the outcome of the famine of 1866.

118. This cataclysm was the turning point in the history of Orissa. A system of canals begun by a private company was taken over and completed by Government at a total cost of Rx. 2,430,390. The province is now placed in direct communication with the Presidency by a high level canal which debouches on the Hooghly. Others control and regulate the water-shed of the Mahanadi, Brahmani and Baiturni rivers. The navigable canals are 177 miles in length; those for irrigation only 75; and the distributaries 764½ miles. The area protected from floods is 427,973 acres: that under command 511,272 acres. The direct financial results from this system have not been as yet encouraging, for it has been found impossible to provide half the area under command with distributaries. But the future is full of promise. In 1881 the total receipts from navigation and water-rates were Rx. 22,273, the charges Rx. 34,465, leaving a deficit of Rx. 12,191. The corresponding figures for 1891-92 are Rx. 37,092, Rx. 42,308, and Rx. 52,164 debit. The irrigated area has risen in the interval from 132,278 to 180,299 acres. The traffic on these canals show a still greater development. In 1881-82 they were used by 14,062 boats of a gross burden amounting to 143,522 tons, conveying cargo valued at Rx. 286,122. In 1890-91, 12,995 boats of a tonnage of 230,243 carried goods worth Rx. 852,155. Rice, the great standby of Orissa, formed the bulk of this traffic; 55,792 tons were carried in 1890-91. Next in importance are the timber and bamboos from the backwood; these are carried on rafts with an aggregate cubic content of 657,038 cubic feet. The navigable rivers of Orissa are the Mahanadi, Brahmani, Baiturni, Suburnarekha, Panchpand and Koyakhai, with numerous tributaries. They carry a vast traffic in the rainy season; but no registration has as yet been attempted. The Division shares with Chittagong the immense advantage of access to the sea. It has three ports—Balasore, Cuttack, and Puri—all visited by ocean-going vessels, with a large coasting trade. In 1891-92 these harbours were visited by 59 ships and steamers of an aggregate tonnage of 50,158; and the value of foreign trade was Rx. 408,962. It consists mainly in exports of rice to Ceylon and the Mauritius. The foreign commerce of these ports is, on the whole, developing rapidly. Balasore shows a decrease during the last five years; but this is far more than compensated by the advance of Cuttack and Puri. Their coasting trade is increasing in a still more rapid ratio. The imports, principally to Balasore, were Rx. 753,172. They include cotton twist, betelnuts, spices, tobacco, drugs, gunny, metals, kerosine oil, and sugar. The exports, mainly rice, were Rx. 547,896. The coasting trade outwards and inwards has risen in five years from Rx. 1,107,954 to Rx. 1,301,068. The Iron Horse has not yet penetrated these remote regions, but the coast railway to Madras is gradually approaching. In the matter of roads, Orissa is still backward. It has but 401 miles of metalled, and 1,822 miles of unmetalled communications; a total of 1,361 miles, or one mile to 7·25 square miles of area.

Trade.

Crops.

119. The trade of Orissa depends entirely on its harvests. Ordinarily the Division produces far more rice than it can consume, and the export trade in this necessary enables the raiyat to supply his simple wants in the matter of foreign luxuries. The year 1891-92, though not so disastrous as in parts of Bengal Proper, and not following a cycle of unfavourable ones, was marked by a badly-distributed rainfall. The latter was deficient during the critical months of June and July 1891, while a cyclone which burst in November was followed by a drought lasting till May 1892, which caused great damage to the cold-weather crops. Taking 100 as representing a full average, we have 62 for pulses, 81 for early, and 75 for winter rice, 68 for sugarcane, and 60 for the cold-weather crops.

Prices.

120. The deficit, however, was more than balanced by a rise in prices. Wheat sold at 24lbs. per rupee in 1889-90 and 22 in 1891-92; rice at 41 and 30, and pulse alone declined in value from 27 to 30. The rise in rice is only due to the increased foreign demand; stimulated as it has been by low exchange rates.

Land revenue.

121. In no part of Bengal has the improvement in communications exercised a more marked effect than in Orissa Division. The geographical position of this tract has influenced its history, which differs widely from that of Bengal. In early ages it formed part of the Hindu realm of Kalinga, which extended from the Hooghly to the Godavari. Conquered by the Afghan invaders of India in the 13th century, 250 years later it was annexed to the Mogul Empire by Akbar's famous general, Todarmal. When that empire declined, Orissa became the bone of contention between the Afghans and the Mahárattas, and in the middle of last century it passed into the latters' hands. Then followed 50 years of intense misery, which have left an indelible impress on the character of the peasantry. From anarchy and spoliation the Division was saved by the British conquest in 1803, and two years later it was brought within the pale of Bengal regulations. The Permanent Settlement extended to a comparatively small

area in Orissa, for at its conquest Maharatta oppression had reduced the number of zamindars to a mere handful. There are but 174 permanently-settled estates on the rent-roll, and the revenue payable by them is Rx. 14,674, out of a total demand, in respect of revenue and cesses, of Rx. 217,884. The rest is made up of estates settled for a term of years with private individuals, or managed directly by Government officials. The incidence of taxation on land is 9 annas 2 pie per head of the population and 6 annas 6 pie per acre of area—a proportion which presses very lightly indeed on agriculture. Nor does the income-tax intercept its fair share of trade profits. The demand is Rx. 5,206, less than the total of an average Bengal district. This gives one assessee to 1,505 of the population, and an average of Rs. 20-1-1 to each. Orissa, like other Divisions bordering on the ocean, is a saliferous tract, and in bygone years its wants, in respect of salt, were almost wholly supplied by the local manufacture. As lately as 1882-83, the home-made salt was 13,155 tons, more than half the total demand, which was then 11·10lbs. per inhabitant, as compared with 9·51bs. in Bengal. In 1891-92 the quantity made on the coast had fallen to 700 tons, the balance required being imported from Ganjam and Calcutta. The ostensible consumption fell to 10·12lbs. per head—a circumstance which is due to wholesale illicit dealings, and not to any decrease in the prosperity of the people. The salt law is admittedly full of defects, and its operation in Orissa is not rendered more effective by the fact that it is now in the hands of the Madras authorities.

Salt.

122. A general survey of the Division is in progress, and a settlement and record of rights has commenced. Some friction has occurred, owing to the greed of the landlord class who are here, with one or two exceptions, remarkable for their ignorance and obstructiveness. On the whole the administration of this district has conduced more largely to the progress and happiness of the people than that of any other part of Bengal, the Eastern districts alone excepted. Though the population of Orissa has not increased in the marvellous ratio observed in Dacca and Chittagong, it has grown during the last 10 years to an extent shown by no Division save those named and Chota Nagpur. In 1881 it had 3,730,735, and in 1891 4,047,352 inhabitants; a growth of 316,617, or 8·4 per cent. The increase was largest in Cuttack, the head-quarter district, which shows 533 to the square mile. Elsewhere the rate of growth and the pressure on the land are less marked.

Landlord and tenant.

Census, 1891.

123. The onward movement has been favoured by the remarkable exemption enjoyed by Orissa from that scourge of Bengal—malarious fever. The mortality from this class of disease was only 9·92 per thousand in 1891-92, while that of the province was 18 94. Cholera, too, was far less destructive to life than in districts further north, the death-rate from that cause having been 1·66 per milles a compared with 3·26. This comparative immunity from cholera is the more gratifying, in that Puri, the capital of the district of that name, contains the shrine of the famous Jagarnath, and is yearly visited by hosts of pilgrims whose filthy habits render it a hot-bed of disease. In 1881 the mortality from cholera in the division was 3·06 per mille; and that 1891 should show so marked a decrease is ascribed to the scanty rainfall. It is yearly becoming more evident that water is the only vehicle for the communication of the cholera virus; and figures such as those quoted have a special value in nosology. Small-pox, on the other hand, is more destructive to human life than in Bengal, a fact due to the intense ignorance and conservatism of the Uriya, who stands on ancient ways, preferring inoculation to the great invention of Jenner.

Public health.

124. Education has not as yet done much to enlighten this community. The number of schools of all classes has, indeed, fallen from 8,035 in 1881-82, or one in 1·22 square miles, to 7,057 in 1891-92, or one in 1·35 square miles of area. Scholars have, however, increased. the total being 96,321, one in four boys of a school-going age, to 116,183, one in three able to attend school. The figures, low as they seem, are better than any other Division, Burdwan excepted, can show. A specially interesting educational fact is the spread of female education. In 1881-82 only 899 Uriya girls were under instruction, while ten years later the total had swollen to 3,362. It is stated on excellent authority that a still greater development would have taken place but for the dearth of qualified female teachers. The Muhammadans of Orissa are not so apathetic in educational matter as their co-religionists in Bengal; and on the whole the inference forced on one by a perusal of the Director's report regarding Orissa is that the schoolmaster is abroad there, and that his influence is working wholly for good.

Education.

125. The Uriyas are a purely agricultural community, 90 per cent. depending on profits derived from land in Cuttack, the head-quarters district. The tenantry are described as well-to-do, and practically all classes enjoy two full meals a day of rice and vegetables. Evidence of increasing prosperity is seen on all sides. The houses are substantial, though the Uriya prefers mud to stone as a building material. Cattle are numerous and sleek; and all sections of the people above the lowest have of late years substituted brass for earthenware in their eating utensils. The statistics available are, however, untrustworthy—a fact which would be more to be regretted were it not that Cuttack is the most advanced district of the three, and enjoys superior facilities for trade. The information for Puri and Balasore is more detailed. In the former district rents are low as compared with Bengal, the average being only Re. 1-9-5 per acre of excellent rice land. The outturn given by an acre in good years is 1,130lbs., which at Re. 1 per 80lbs., has a money value of Rs. 14-1. The straw yields Rs. 2

Rural well-being.

more, making the gross proceeds Rs. 16-1. The cost of cultivation is less than Rs. 2 per acre so that a raiyat tilling five acres, nets produce to the value of more than Rs. 70. This is amply sufficient to maintain a family of five or six persons in comfort. Holdings of five acres predominate. For others there are resources which few other districts offer. The great Chilka lake contains an immense variety of shell and other fish, which are preserved and exported to considerable distances in the interior, even to Burma. The forest tracts give many sorts of roots and herbs, which, boiled in rice liquor, supplement a purely grain diet. Uriyas thrive on a regimen too deficient in albuminoids to suit a European constitution. The physique of all classes, though not robust, shows no signs of want of nourishment. Their houses are better built, neater and more clean than those of Bengal. Their clothing is scanty, but then the climate is warmer and less variable than in Upper India. Brass is still the favourite material for female ornaments, and women may be seen struggling under armlets weighing 20lbs. Cattle are very numerous, but, owing to absence of pasture in the cultivated tract, the yield of milk is very poor. Finally, the use of brass vessels for eating is universal in all classes above the mere beggars. Balasore is even more dependent on agriculture than the sister districts. 98 per cent. of her people are wholly, or in great part dependent on land, and 40 per cent. have no other avocation than tillage. The holdings vary, from 7 to 15 acres; the lower level being the most common. A pair of bullocks are necessary for a farm of that size, and with such a holding a raiyat can maintain a family of eight dependents with comfort. Rents are extremely low, averaging Re. 1-2 per acre; and the total expense of cultivation does not exceed Re. 1-4. The average produce is 980lbs., which at 80 per rupee brings in Rs. 12-4 an acre. Straw is worth Re. 1-8 per acre, so that the gross profit is Rs. 13-12, and the net Rs. 12-8. On this basis a raiyat holding seven acres makes a clear income exceeding Rs. 87-8, and is better off than his brother of Puri. Larger holders have of course a considerable surplus of grain which they advance to the poorer men, enabling them to tide over the intervals between harvests. These are the *mahajans* so universal in Bengal, a class, which for want of an English equivalent, I have uniformly styled money-lenders. The rates of interest charged is Rs. 25 per cent., and as the law of limitation seems unknown, these debts swell from generation to generation with compound interest; and two-thirds of the peasant class continues through life the *mahajan's* bond servants. It is the *mahajans* who exhibit the most unequivocal signs of prosperity, exulting in petty luxuries such as coloured cloths, shoes, umbrellas, and bulky female ornaments. But it must not be supposed that the lower strata are ill-fed or unprosperous. The Uriya has inherited from the bad old Maharatta time an ingrained dread of displaying wealth, and all classes are really far better off than a superficial observer would imagine. There are very few landless labourers in this district. Raiyats who till less than three acres supplement their earnings by working for their richer neighbours. The daily wages in such cases is 12 to 16lbs. of paddy per diem, say 2 annas 10 pies, an amount more than enough to maintain a family in tolerable comfort in a country where necessaries and humble luxuries are so cheap as they are in Orissa.

Manufactures.

II.—LANDLESS CLASSES.

126. There are no mines in this Division, and the only manufacture is that of salt, which, as we have seen, has been nearly driven out of the market by importations from Europe. The standard of skill amongst the artizan class is very low, except in and near the administrative capital, where delicacy of touch and mechanical skill have made Cuttack jewellery famous throughout India. Artizans are generally prosperous. The wages of skilled labour are lower than in Bengal proper. They are best at Puri, where masons, blacksmiths, carpenters, and thatchers earn 5 to 8 annas per diem according to their acquirements. Here, also, we see an upward tendency: wages having risen from 25 to 50 per cent. in three years, thus more than keeping pace with the enhancement in the price of necessaries. They have remained unchanged in Balasore and Puri, where masons may be had for 2 to 4 annas per diem, carpenters demand 2 annas to 5 annas, thatchers 2 annas 6 pie to 3 annas 6 pie, and blacksmiths 2 annas 6 pie to 8 annas. Balasore is, all round, the best labour market of the three; but though no marked improvement in rates has occurred during the last three years, it is an undoubted fact that wages have doubled within living memory. It is the rule with artizans to supplement their earnings by the produce of small holdings. Weavers, who in most districts are either helpless paupers or have abandoned their hereditary craft for agriculture, flourish in Orissa. They mostly work on imported cotton twist, and their coarse but durable cloths are preferred to the product of Lancashire factories. A skilled weaver can earn Rs. 15 per mensem with the assistance of his family. It is noteworthy that the lower class of artizans are the only strata of Uriya society which permit their women folk to engage in manual labour.

Artizans.

Urban population.

127. The urban population of Orissa is unimportant. The Division contains only five towns with more than 10,000 inhabitants, the aggregate being 126,410. The ratio of increase in the decade is about 13 per cent. Thus the town population in Orissa is growing half as rapidly again as that of the country—a fact due to the great development of trade. A resident of 6 years' standing at Balasore writes: "I notice very many changes, one and all of which indicate material progress in the condition of the agricultural classes and the district at large. The imports alone have vastly increased. In the place of a few native sloops bringing in goods in the early years of my stay here, we have not only weekly steamers,

but additional supplies by the canal route. The town itself shows a great increase in trade. Shops have multiplied for all kinds of stores. In the place of one or two cloth godowns we now have rows of them hanging out linen and woollen goods to attract customers. Serais, grain and other shops have increased, and sweetmeat shops largely. All round us the town shows every sign of prosperity."

Emigration.

128. Of emigration in the proper sense of the word there is none in Orissa, but the inhabitants have for many years been in the habit of seeking service in every part of Upper India as palanquin and domestic bearers. There are some thousands in Calcutta alone, who are able to lay by large sums for investment in land near their homes. This movement is on the wane, for modern India finds this mode of travelling too slow, and Uriyas have successful rivals in the more industrious and less scrupulous Beharis.

Excise.

129. The material progress of Orissa cannot be gauged by the excise revenue, for the restrictions imposed on the vend of country spirits, to which I have already alluded, have brought about a considerable decline in the spirit traffic. The total revenue in 1891-92 was equivalent to an expenditure of 2 annas 4 pie per head of the population; it had increased 20 per cent. in ten years. The sluggish Uriya is greatly addicted to opium and its compounds, and the bulk of the increase is due to enhanced consumption of that drug.

Native States.

130. The Native States of Orissa present many important differences as compared with British territory. Mohurbhanj, the largest of them, showed that the cultivating class are divided into several sections, some prosperous, others very much the reverse. At the top of the list come the *sarbarakars*, contractors of revenue, whose only object is to squeeze as much profit as possible from the villages they farm. They are prosperous, but extravagance prevents them rising to wealth. It is common to see ornaments worth Rs. 25 to Rs. 50 on their womenkind. They indulge in two and sometimes three meals, which often include goats' flesh; and prefer cheap and showy products of English and German looms to those of indigenous weaver. Next in order come the *thani* raiyats, who possess rights of occupancy. They are in fairly prosperous circumstances, and always command an abundance of food. In marked contrast to them are the tenants-at-will, liable to be ousted by the sarbarakars, and like the French of old, *taillable et corveable à merci*. They do not suffer, however, from any insufficiency of food, their daily meals including two and sometimes three pounds of rice with boiled leaves of jungle plants. Pulse can rarely be afforded, and the allowance of salt is unduly curtailed. It is only the first two classes who can afford brass vessels, and carpets, blankets, beds, and bedding are rare. There are even lower depths. The poor jungle men, Pans and Haris, have fallen on evil days, owing to the wholesale reclamation and the spread of the reign of law, involving the conception of private property in land. Cut off from the supplies of jungle fruit and flowers open to their fathers, unable to dig and ashamed to beg, the Pans and Haris are the only classes in this side of India who show unmistakable signs of misery. But artizans in these Tributary States thrive hardly more. Weavers find their occupation gone owing to the growing preference of consumers for European goods. Potters are in better plight, but workers in iron almost starve in spite of incessant toil.

General.

131. On the whole the tenantry of this State compare most unfavourably with those of British territory. Orissa, as I have already observed, owes even more to us than the most favoured districts of Bengal Proper. We have raised her from the very dust, and substituted a reign of peace and law for one of unbridled rapine. In all directions, writes a high official, who knows the Division well, the immense strides made by Orissa generally in education, commerce, irrigation, communications, and in general wealth and prosperity, are conspicuous to the most superficial observer. And yet, if one looks below the surface, the great mass of people live the same lives, and have the same limited hopes and fears that they had twenty years ago. The Uriya raiyat's sole request and desire is still to be left alone, and not to have his condition improved against his will. A large proportion of his earnings is still spent on his social and religious ceremonies, and he rarely moves beyond the boundary of his native village. If ever the Uriyas are to awake from their lethargy, and the country is to cease to be the "sleepy hollow" which it is truly called, the instrument of the revival will be railway communications.

VIII.—EAST BIHAR.

The Bhagalpur Division.

Geography.

132. The Bhagalpur Division includes the districts of Malda, Purnea, Bhagalpur and Monghyr, and the non-regulation tract known as the Sonthal Parganas. The area is 20,511 square miles with a population of 8,063,160, or 418 to the square mile. Though it forms with Patna the old province of Bihár, it is now, in an ethnological and administrative point of view, a hybrid Division. Malda, which bounds it to the east, is a purely Bengal district; and Purnea is a border land where a bastard Urdu and a still more corrupt Bengali strive for the mastery. Like Patna, it is bisected from east to west by the Ganges, and its north and central portions belong to the great valley formed by that river, to the south-east there is an isolated outcrop of hills which is a close preserve for aboriginal tribes, and is known as the Sonthal Parganas. The south is made up of rolling ridges which rise into the forest-clad hills of the Chota Nagpur plateau.

With so large a highland area, the proportion of cultivated land is necessarily small. Out of 13,128,320 acres only 4,973,949 are in this category. The waste lands are mainly upland valleys, which need but irrigation by dams erected across the mountain streams to render them suitable for the plough. In the north the Kusi, a broad and rapid river fed by Himalayan snows, is swinging towards the west, and yearly rendering thousands of fertile acres useless by deposits of sand. The river system of Bhagalpur has, indeed, an important bearing on its prosperity. It is made up of the Ganges and its tributaries from the north, the Mahananda, Kalindi, Purnabhaba, Panar, Kusi and Tiljuga. These are all navigable by boats of considerable burden, some as large as 27 tons; and the riverine tract is thus well supplied with the cheapest of all forms of carriage. Deficiencies in this respect are supplied by the railway system, which is unusually complete. On the south of the Ganges, the old or loop-line of the East Indian Railway follows the great river through 175 miles of its course, traversing the east of the Sonthal Parganas and the centre of Bhagalpur and Monghyr. Further south we have the chord-line, the mail route between Calcutta and Bombay, which skirts the east of the Sonthal Parganas and the district of Monghyr, its length within the division being 137 miles. Beyond the Ganges, the Eastern Bengal State and the Bengal and North-Western Railways have stretched out their arms to meet, and have connected this once isolated territory with Assam on the east and Upper India on the west. The length of the united cita Gangetic lines is 146 miles; and the total mileage of the Division is 458 miles, or one to 42 square miles of area. Though the northern system is very incompletely provided with passenger and goods accommodation, and its working is constantly interrupted by changes in the Ganges and Kusi, its influence on trade is actually very great. The railway has well-nigh supplanted the Kusi as the vehicle for commerce in the north, for the river navigation was full of danger to the clumsy native craft that used it. In the matter of roads, the Division stands well on paper. There are 5,220 miles in all, or a mile to 3·92 square miles of area. The mileage of metalled roads, however, is only 408, though materials in abundance are procurable at a small cost in the non-alluvial tract. The necessity of feeder roads linking the railway with the centres of commerce is even more felt here than in other Divisions, and the paucity of the resources at the disposal of the District Boards is a great drawback to the development of trade. The latter is indeed at a very low ebb at present. In ordinary years a large export of wheat, pulses, and oilseeds, takes place in all the districts: while Malda and Purnea export silk, indigo, jute, gunny and hides. Owing to a succession of inferior harvests, the outward movement of food-grain and oilseeds declined as a whole, though high prices and depressed exchange tempted holders of old stocks of wheat in Bhagalpur and Malda to unload for the benefits of the English market. The shrinkage of the export trade has made itself felt on the imports. Monghyr, which ordinarily imports rice, took less than usual; and what is more significant of a reduced purchasing power, the imports of salt, declined. In Bhagalpur those of European piece-goods fell by 8·8, and salt by 6·2 per cent. Purnea, too, took less piece-goods, but her larger export of jute and cotton enabled her to take more salt, metals and cotton twist. In Malda we see the same decline in piece-goods; and the trade in mangoes, which grow to a perfection in Malda, unknown in the rest of Upper India, fell off greatly owing to the poorness of the crop. The trade with Nepal has been stimulated by this addition to our railway system. We take grain, fowls, ghee, orange, cattle, timber, blankets, and woollens from the Nepalese, and send them metals, salt, piece-goods, kerosine oil, and sugar. Owing, however, to the crop failures across the border, the Darbar prohibited the export of wheat and rice; and this measure inflicted a partial paralysis on trade. The Sonthal Parganas are a tract presenting many peculiarities, and it must be touched on separately. They exported a large amount of food-grains to meet requirements of the Bihár districts, which suffered from crop failures. The exports of *mahua* flowers used in distillations was 3,700 tons; the trade in *sabai* grass used largely by paper-makers is expanding rapidly. There are nine presses at work, and the quantity sent to Calcutta amounted to 5,500 tons.

Communication.

Trade.

133. The trade of Bhagalpur reflected the state of the harvests with accuracy. They have been injuriously affected by a deficient and badly distributed rainfall. The east of the district has, on the whole, suffered less than other parts. In Purnea the rainfall was hardly half the normal, and it ceased prematurely in August. The result was that the autumn rice crop gave but half an average, while the winter rice and the cold-weather crops failed miserably. Malda was also in a sad plight. Her early rice, indeed, came up to the average, but the cold-weather crops—wheat, pulses and oilseeds—gave little more than half the usual outturn. The mango, the export of which brings very large sums into the district, yielded wretchedly. Bhagalpur had climatic conditions even worse than those of 1873, which led to the too famous Bihar famine of the following year. The autumn crops of Indian corn and coarse grain north of the Ganges failed entirely. The rice crop was but little better in that tract. The harvest was not so unfavourable in the portion south of the Ganges, which had a heavier rainfall and greater facilities for irrigation. But the drought between August and March injured the cold-weather crops everywhere, and the raiyats' anxieties were increased by a visitation of locusts. Sugarcane and cold-weather crops, the poorer outturn of which in 1891-92 was discounted by fair harvests in the previous years, give fair results on a three years' average. Taking 100 to represent the normal, the figures for these crops is 81, for winter rice 75, for wheat 62, and pulses 56.

Crops.

134. Prices rose in response to failures of supply and a larger demand for exportation; but the upward movement was not so marked as in some other districts. Wheat sold for 32lbs. per rupee in 1889-90, and for 25lbs. during the current year. Rice rose from 36 to 24, and pulse from 37 to 33. It is worthy of note that the prices of wheat and rice are the same in both Divisions of Bihár, and that the average price is identical in divisions so remote as Bihár, Chittagong and Rajshahi. The Chota Nagpur raiyat alone is precluded by its miserable roads and vast and thinly-peopled country from participating in the gain from high prices.

Prices.

135. The effect of adverse seasons was reflected in the unmistakeable signs of distress which made their appearance towards the end of January 1892 in the district of Purnea, and in the north of Bhagalpur and Monghyr. The tracts affected measured 1,110 square miles, with a population of 463,000. Relief works were organized in the shape of repairs to roads and embankments and the re-excavation of tanks. The numbers employed on the 31st March were 7,000; and there were in addition 1,346 in receipt of gratuitous relief. The total expenditure was Rx. 2,300. The need for relief was most severely felt in Purnea, where crop failures had been most complete. In Monghyr it was confined to a narrow strip close to the Nepal frontier. The number of applicants was kept down by the resource found in the edible roots of a reed known as *ckichar*, 4 or 5lbs. of which were to be had with little labour. These boiled gave a nourishing if not very palatable meal. The rain that fell in May gave work in the fields, and rendered relief operations unnecessary. I have enlarged on the harvests of this Division, inasmuch as it is known to be poorer and more backward than Patna, and it is deeply interesting to note the effects of extensive crop disasters on the population. This year, from an agricultural point of view, was more unfavourable to the cultivator than 1873, which produced a depletion of stocks, and necessitated famine relief operations on a vast scale. That history has not repeated itself in 1892 is due to an increase in the resources of the people, the existence of larger stocks, and to vast improvements in communication by rail. No better indication can be afforded of solid progress in a comparatively short period.

Famine relief.

136. This Division passed with the rest of Bihár to the English under the treaty of 1765, and from that date to the era of the Permanent Settlement most of the districts were flagrantly misgoverned. Corrupt ministerial servants were suffered to embezzle and alienate State lands, and to introduce unauthorized deductions from the revenues. The revenue of Purnea, for instance, under the Subadar Mir Kasim's able rule, was Rx. 210,000: and at the Permanent Settlement it was fixed at Rx. 127,847. Two-thirds of the splendid territory north of the Ganges was then grass or tree jungle, and yielded nominal profits, which formed the basis of settlement. The interests of Government were safeguarded by no survey or examination of assets. The settlement in fact was a mere guess-work tempered by fraud. The land revenue is the merest fraction of the profits of the soil. Including cesses, it is only Rx. 372,510, or 7 annas 1 pie per head of the population, and 4 annas 11 pies per acre of area. The incidence of Income-tax is also relatively light; but trade is less brisk in Bhagalpur than Patna, and it is probable that a greater proportion of its people pay tribute. The proceeds of the tax last year were Rx. 23,604, payable by 3,599 assessees, 1 to 809 of the population, and taxed at an average of Rs. 21-13-5 each.

Land revenue.

137. The backward state of the Division is reflected in the relations between landlord and tenant. Rack-renting is said to be the rule, and consideration for their interests the exception here. The Tenancy Act with its provisions intended to give the cultivator of the soil his fair share in its produce is here a dead-letter. The extension to Bhagalpur of the survey and record of rights which has begun in the neighbouring districts of Bihár seems called for.

Landlord and tenant.

138. The increase in population is greater than could be anticipated by one acquainted with the varying material conditions of the districts of Bhagalpur. The inhabitants in 1881 numbered 8,063,160, while the total in 1891 was 8,582,490, an increase of 519,330, or 6·4 per cent. It was largest in Malda, where it amounted to 103,432 in a population of 711,487, for here material advantages in point of fertility and water-carriage are greater than elsewhere. The extension of tillage in this district has progressed rapidly of late years. It was formerly the seat of empire, and the site of its ancient capital, Gaur, was a vast chain of swamps and jungle. These have been reclaimed by Sonthal settlers, and the result is apparent in the population. Purnea shows only 5, and Bhagalpur and Monghyr 3·2 per cent. In the first two the area of unculturable high land is very large, while in the third the standard of vitality is low, and the death-rate as high as in Northern Bengal. The Sonthal Parganas are peopled by primitive aboriginal tribes. The climate is very healthy and social conditions are favourable. Government is a very large proprietor, and its estates are models of moderation and good management. The population rose in ten years from 1,567,966 to 1,754,196—an increase of 186,230, or nearly 12 per cent.

Census of 1891.

139. The sanitary condition of this Division has deteriorated of late years. The eastern districts of Purnea and Malda showed a very heavy mortality in 1891. Malarious fevers are responsible for a rate per mille of 25·75 and 33·88; Malda sharing with Nadia in Central Bengal a sad pre-eminence of unhealthiness in this respect. Bhagalpur and Monghyr were once noted for their salubrity, but both show a fever death-rate exceeding 21 per mille. Cholera, too, was unusually rife, and accounts for 4·43 per thousand of the deaths. It is, however, hardly fair to take 1891-92 as a

Public health.

representative year in this respect. Fever, for instance, killed 60,830 in Purnea in 1891, as compared with 36,714 in 1890; and the deaths from cholera sprung from 5,908 to 18,591 in a single year. Sickness was still greater in Malda, proving that drought, by impairing the water-supply, is a direct agent in promoting the spread of these scourges of Indian life, cholera and fever.

Education.

140. I have alluded to the comparatively slow growth of moral and material progress in this Division. It is a regrettable fact that the decade in an educational aspect is one of retrogression. In 1882 there were 7,757 schools of all classes, 7,504 of them being primary schools. There was one school to 2·60 square mile of area. These were attended by 89,403 pupils; one in nine of a school-going age. In 1891-92 the number of schools had fallen to 3,422, one to 5·99 square miles of area; and the number of pupils to 80,009, or one in 10 boys fit to receive instruction. The falling-off is almost wholly in the primary schools; and while these have declined from 7,504 to 3,205, high schools have risen in number from 8 to 16. The one bright spot is the large increase in the numbers of girls under instruction. In 1881 there were but 29 female schools with 396 pupils. Ten years later there were 118 attended by 2,397 girls. It is only fair to add that the scarcity and the abnormal sickness of the year had some effect in reducing the number of primary schools. Other and deeper causes, however, must be at work to give Bhagalpur an unenviable prominence as the only Division in Bengal which fails to show substantial progress during the decade.

Rural well-being.

141. We have seen that Bhagalpur offers greater differences as regards the standard of comfort attained by the people than any other Division. In accordance with the occult natural law which seems to govern the progress of Bengal, the eastern districts are most prosperous. In Malda minute enquiries were made in 1888 into the circumstances of a fairly typical population of 3,500 souls, 6,496 of these were found to be cultivators pure and simple. The average number in a family slightly exceeded seven; the total cultivated area 2,046 acres. The number of holdings was 875, but 130 were in the possession of sub-tenants cultivating on the half-profits system. 206 were occupied by resident raiyats, 110 or 53 per cent. of these being less than three acres in area. The occupants of such were forced to supplement the profits of land by working as labourers. The typical holding is one of five acres. It is the smallest area from which a fairly comfortable living can be had in average years. Rather more than 3 acres of this would be under winter rice, 1·2 under summer rice, ·3 acres under jute, and the rest cultivated with Indian corn, summer onions, cucumbers and coarse vegetables. But 1·25 acre is twice cropped, yielding oilseeds, pulses, wheat or barley in the cold weather months, then the total extent in the cultivation would be 6·25 acres. The produce per acre of rice is stated as 1,440lbs., of wheat 1,200lbs., of oilseeds 420lbs., of pulses 720lbs., of jute 960lbs. The gross produce of rice, the mainstay of the house, would average 6,320lbs. The family of a cultivator of this position averages five members; but large holders nearly always have more numerous families, bringing the general average up to 7. At 2·1lbs. of rice per head per diem the annual consumption comes to 3,840lbs., leaving 2,480lbs. for sale. The proceeds of this are Rs. 30-12. Home-grown pulse, the other main article of diet, is consumed in the rate of 4 ounces per diem. From the sale of other articles produced, not required for home use, he will get Rs. 36-1. His cows, goats and poultry will yield him a money profit of Rs. 13 per annum, his mangoes, bamboos and grass Rs. 4, making a gross income of Rs. 83-13. The average rental is Rs. 2-6-7½ per acre, and with cesses, the outgoings under this head of a farm of five acres are Rs. 12-7-2. The actual cost of cultivation is Rs. 6-9 per acre, but a raiyat of this type would require little extraneous help, and it is only necessary to allow Rs. 2 per acre for seed and harvest expenses. This would bring the total up to Rs. 22-7-2; and leave him with a net profit of Rs. 61-5-10. The sum required for the support of the family is the next consideration. As we have seen, the staple of the daily fare, rice or other grain and pulse, is provided by the farm. This also furnishes him with spices, vegetables, tobacco and firewood. His expenses for food need only include Rs. 3 for salt, Rs 4-8 for oil, 12 annas for fish, and Re. 1-8 renewal of cooking vessels; total Rs. 9-12. Clothing would cost Rs 7; ceremonies, school-fees, ornaments, and petty expenses Rs. 15. Thus, the total family charges would be Rs. 31-12, and the net balance. Rs. 29-9-10. This surplus, however, is little more than nominal, for cultivators are nearly all in debt, and the village Shylock's demands by way of interest will swallow up the balance and more besides. On the whole, the inference from these inquiries is that the bulk of cultivators in Malda are well off, or would be so but for improvident expenditure, rendering recourse to the money-lender inevitable. Statistics from Purnea are neither so detailed nor so carefully compiled as those I have quoted; but it is abundantly clear that the agricultural population here is nearly as well to do in good years as that of Malda. Bhagalpur and Monghyr exhibit conditions more nearly approaching those prevalent in Bihar than Malda and Purnea. From Bhagalpur no elaborate details as to profits from land and expenses of living are available. Thirty-five per cent. of those who live wholly by agriculture pay more than Rs. 20 per annum by way of rent; and therefore cultivate more than seven acres. They are comfortably off, and would be still more flourishing but for the nearly universal load of debt. Twenty-eight per cent. pay from Rs. 10 and Rs. 20 as rent, and hold five acres on the average. These, too, do fairly well in average years, and are not so dependent on the money-lender as the preceding class, because their credit is not so good. Nineteen per cent. pay between Rs. 5 and Rs. 10, and hold three acres on the average. A further class averaging 18 per cent and paying less than Rs. 5 are obliged to

labour for others. Thus 63 in the hundred of agriculturists are well to-do and adequately fed. It remains to discuss the position of the remaining 37 per cent. A family of this section averages six members, two of them able-bodied male adults, two female adults, and two unable to work. Eight pounds per diem is considered a sufficient allowance. This equals 2,880lbs. per year, and is just the proceeds of 2½ acres of land. Clothes cost Rs 4 per annum and salt at 10lbs. per head Rs. 3-8 Given half an acre more, or three acres in all, the necessaries of life may be provided. Thus only 18 per cent. of the agriculturist population fails to secure a maintenance from land. These, however, have other resources. Cattle are universally abundant in this district. A raiyat holding 1½ acres was found to own six cows, four bullocks, two buffaloes, two goats, a plough and an oil-mill. The value of the stock is certainly not less than Rs. 150, and his income derived from the sale of ghee and lending out the bullocks would be at least Rs. 30. Another with 2½ acres had seven cows, two bullocks, two goats and a plough. Each of these men, and they are typical cases, was at least as well off as one farming five acres with a pair of bullocks. Live-stock is a very important factor in agricultural prosperity; and it is much to be regretted that no attempt was made at the last census to ascertain the property held by a cultivator. In a village of the Bhagalpur district, 53 raiyats were found in possession of 226 cows, rather more than 4 each; 48 owned 165 bullocks, 21 had 65 buffaloes between them, and 49 owned 445 sheep and goats. Speaking generally, the great bulk of the agricultural community can command two meals a day, but there is everywhere a percentage, who from infirmity, or being too poor to procure labour when it is indispensable, get a scanty outturn and are often pinched for food. There is no tendency here to substitute brass for earthen vessels, and the fact that gold and silversmiths everywhere allege that they get less work than their fathers would point to a diminution in the peasants' means. Indebtedness is almost universal in Bhagalpur. In a fairly prosperous village, 42 tenants taken at random were found to owe Rs. 18 apiece in cash, besides large amounts of grain. The rate of interest for each advance is 6 pies per rupee per mensem, or 37½ per cent. per annum. Grain is charged for at 50 per cent. if repaid at harvest. Should the debt be allowed to run on till the following year, one-third is added. Under this system a debt of 80lbs. of grain borrowed in March will swell to 180lbs. in the December of the following year. In Monghyr a detailed investigation was made as to the means of several hundred cultivators taken at random. It was conducted in an inquisitorial spirit, and naturally failed to elicit satisfactory evidence. The produce of the soil is absurdly underrated, just as would be the case were a European farmer to be examined with regard to his income. The main point of interest in Monghyr is the extraordinary prevalence of indebtedness At least 90 per cent. of the cultivators owe money ranging between Rs 10 and Rs. 500. The average amount is Rs. 60, equivalent to a year's earnings. Only 6·5 per cent. of the 750 families, who proved the subject of inquiries, used eating vessels of earthenware. The rest had brass and gun-metal plates and drinking bowls, which, with the few silver ornaments worn by the women, are estimated to be worth Rs. 17-8 per family. In some cases the value of ornaments exceeds Rs. 50. The average cultivator of Monghyr is able to afford two meals per diem throughout the year. His midday repast is a substantial one of rice or boiled wheat and pulse, or sweet-potatoes in the season. The evening meal is composed of cakes of wheat, millet or Indian corn; and is amply sufficient to sustain healthy life. Generally speaking, the cultivators of the Bhagalpur Division are well fed, the sole exception being the northern half of the head-quarters districts, and a limited tract of Purnea and Monghyr. There penury is more common; and the shoe pinches severely when harvests fail. Some improvement in the staying-power of this class must have taken place since the famine year (1874), for in spite of the failure of the staple crop, and the poor outturn of others, actual distress has been confined to a small tract. This is partly due to higher prices and better communications, but it also indicates the existence of unsuspected stocks of grain.

Labourers.

142. Agricultural labourers in Bhagalpur are more numerous than in the average Bengal Division. The number shown by the last census returns was 240,883. The districts showing the largest proportion are Malda and Purnea, but here a doubt arises as to whether the landless classes are alone included. In Malda enquiries showed that the earnings of daily labourers are from Rs. 21 to Rs. 28 per annum in the case of males, Rs. 10 for boys between 10 and 15, and Rs. 2-13 for children. Special payments at harvest time are about half as much, and there are small additional gratifications allowed by employers as a matter of custom. The gross earnings of the labourer are between Rs 61 and Rs. 81 annually. He is at least as well off as a holder of five acres, for having less credit he cannot incur debt, and thus enjoys alone the produce of his toil. In Purnea Rs. 3 to Rs. 4 per mensem appear to be the usual wages, so that labourers are not so well off as in Malda. Here a species of serfdom is encountered. There are numerous cases in which *Kamias* as they are called are by custom bound to serve the farmer on nominal wages of Rs. 6 per annum. These men are well fed and suffer but little in times of scarcity. They get a large proportion of the grain during the harvest months; their earnings having a money value of Rs. 5 as compared with Rs. 3 earned by a free hand. Most families have cows and common rights, and pigs are kept by nearly all. A patch of garden land keeps them in coarse vegetables, and during the winter season they get occasional jobs as palanquin bearers. Finally, the large number of indigo factories in the district are a great stand-by to labourers in the slack months, June to September. It cannot be said that the condition of labourers in Purnea is unfavourable in average years; but they of course feel more than the landed class the pinch of bad time such as the present. The Monghyr

labourer in nearly every case has a farm of one to three acres, and supplements his gain per land by working for rich neighbours. The daily wage is to the value of 2 annas, nearly Rs. 4 per mensem. This class are at least as well to do as small cultivators. The Bhagalpur labourer receives 8lbs. of coarse grain, or 5lbs. of rice per diem while at work. Adult females and boys earn a quarter as much. Part of this is paid in the shape of a full midday meal while in the field, and the rest in dry grain in sunset. The amount not required for consumption is enough at present prices to provide for his simple wants in the shape of clothes, salt, and tobacco. During the two or three harvest months these wages are doubled; and when, as is often the case, the lands yield but one crop of winter rice. The months of September and October are a period of slack work and short commons. Serfdom is still prevalent here, but is on the decline. Money wages are 2 annas per diem or Rs. 4 monthly. The Bhagalpur labourer is worse off than him of Monghyr, just as the Monghyr hind might envy his colleagues of Malda and Purnea. The Sonthal Parganas are a tract offering so many peculiarities that a brief separate reference must be accorded them. They are inhabited by aboriginal tribes, who require and have been given a distinct system of Government, partaking more of the patriarchal than that necessitated by the more complex civilization of Bengal proper. Thus a very large proportion of the district is a Government estate, managed in the best interests of the tenants. In the remainder the rents have all been settled by Government, and they are paid through a village headman, who is a Government nominee. Thus, two of the greatest curses of a raiyat's existence—rack-renting and oppression by subaltern agents—are almost unknown in Santalia. The Sonthals are a brave, light-hearted and laborious people, given to bouts of drunkenness, but ordinarily frugal and peaceable. They have weather-tight huts, and keep pigs, poultry, sheep and goats. Entirely without caste prejudices, they eat the flesh of all animals and birds. An exception to the general prosperity is found in the Paharias, a hunting people, whose preserves have been invaded by Sonthal cultivators, driven by increased population to seek fresh fields and pastures new. The Paharias, ousted from the plains, have taken refuge in the hill territories, which no longer give them a sufficient maintenance, the problems afforded by their future are complicated by their love for strong drink, on which their scanty means are lavished. The high standard of prosperity in the Sonthal Parganas is reflected in the increase in the population. The census returns for 1881 showed 1,567,966: those for 1891, 1,754,196, an increase of 186,230, or 12 per cent.

II.—LANDLESS CLASSES.

Manufactures.

143. Bhagalpur lags behind Patna in the important matter of manufactures. Indigo is made in every district and employs much European capital. Silk was once the staple produce of Malda, but this industry is on the downward path. Iron-smelting occupies many aborigines in South Bhagalpur and the Sonthal Parganas. The other industries are those connected with the supply of rude utensils for field and household use. It is a remarkable fact that, as in Orissa, the country looms have not been driven from the field of supply by European factories The home-made cloths are everywhere prized for their durability. Monghyr alone has the advantage of poppy cultivation, which under our system of advances gives the cultivator a supply of cash at a time when every rupee is of the utmost value to him.

Artizans.

144. Skilled labour is not required in this Division, and the wages of handicraftsmen are comparatively low. They approach the Bengal standard in the eastern districts of Malda and Purnea, where masons, blacksmiths and carpenters can command from four annas to eight annas per diem. In the first district, the average annual earnings of 24 families of blacksmiths, goldsmiths, potters, carpenters and weavers were found to be 80; carpenters and blacksmiths were best off, then potters, but goldsmiths' and weavers' earnings are barely sufficient to secure a maintenance. Artizans in Purnea are still better off The village carpenter, who is also blacksmith, receives 30 to 40lbs. of grain for each plough at harvest time, and on consideration of the allowance, he keeps agricultural implements in repair. The barber and washerman draw 10 to 20lbs of grain annually from each family they serve, according to its size, while the cobbler has a presumptive right to all the skins of animals which die within the village confines. His spouse is the midwife of the community. The picture presented by Purnea is that of a very primative organization. In Bhagalpur, too, the village carpenter and blacksmith gets a yearly dole per plough, which is decreasing, as the railway has made grain more valuable. Artizans generally earn three annas per diem, or with extra jobs on the occasion of ceremonies, Rs. 6 per mensem; and can always command two cooked meals. The weavers here are in a bad plight. Imported cotton have been their ruin, and half the class has taken to field labour. The *tasar* silk industry, once so important at Bhagalpur, is slowly decaying. The number of looms has decreased by 50 per cent. in ten years, and many weavers have become masons. Monghyr artizans make about as much as those of Bhagalpur, but they generally have the resource of an acre or two of land, which makes them perfectly independent. The supply of artizans is not equal to the demand in Bhagalpur, and the condition of that class is at least as good as that of middle class families.

Urban population.

145. The urban population of Bhagalpur is numerically unimportant, though we see a tendency to aggregation which is not characteristic of Bengal. The largest town has 69,106 inhabitants, and there are but six with a population of more than 10,000. The principal towns show a trifling increase, as compared with results of 1881.

Excise.

146. The excise revenue from all sources in 1891-92 was Rx. 125,230, or 2 annas 5 pie per head of the population. The increase in ten years has been Rx. 10,570, and it would doubtless have been much more considerable but for restrictions placed on the vend of spirits in urban areas. The falling off in Bhagalpur and Monghyr is nearly Rx. 10,000, though the revenue from the *tari* fermented juice of the date palm rose by Rx 34,000. Looked at as a whole, the excise administration of Bhagalpur indicates an advance in the purchasing power of the lowest classes during the decade, nor does the tide of emigration show any deficiency in the means of subsistence. In the eastern districts there is practically none; for land is abundant and cheap, and the people slothful and timid. There is a small amount of free emigration from Bhagalpur and Monghyr, though 7,000 vagrants from South Bihár passed through the former district. The Sonthals alone show a capacity for colonization. A large part of the forests which clothed the site of the ancient capital of Bengal in Malda has been cleared by the Sonthal emigrants. Thriving communities of them are to be found in North Bengal; and a large Sonthal colony, founded under State assistance by a Christian missionary, flourishes in the Assam Duars. There is a steady flow from Santalia to the tea districts; but the volume of registered emigration is yearly decreasing.

Emigration.

General review.

147. A general review of the Bhagalpur Division shows that it is intermediate in well-being between the districts of Bengal proper and the least prosperous ones of Patna or Bihár; but far below the average Bengal divisions in point of intellectual development; and that its moral progress is slower than might have been expected when the low degree of pressure on land and the many facilities for trade are taken into account.

IX.—WESTERN BIHAR.

The Patna Division.

Geography.

148. To the extreme west of Bengal lies the great Patna Division, comprising the districts of Champaran, Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga, Saran, Patna, Gaya, and Shahabad. Its total area is 23,675 square miles, and its census population, in 1891, 15,811,014, or 667 to the square mile. It is bounded on the north by the independent States of Nepál; on the south by the Chota Nagpur; on the east by the Bihar Division of Bhagalpur; and on the west by the North-Western Provinces districts of Mirzapur, Benares, Ghazipur, Ballia, and Gorakpur. The Division is divided by the Ganges into two tracts, not very unequal as to area, but differing widely in density of population. The northern half, comprising Saran, Champaran, Muzaffarpur, and Darbhanga, contains 12,522 square miles, and 9,840,342 inhabitants, 785 to the square mile. The southern portion, including Patna, Gaya, and Shahabad, has 11,153 square miles, with a population of 5,970,672, or 535 to the square mile. The two tracts differ widely as to economic and social conditions. North Bihar is one vast alluvial plain, formed by the Ganges and its navigable tributaries, the Ghagra, Gandak, Bagmati, and Tiljuga, besides countless minor streams. To the north-west only of the district of Champaran, on the frontier of Nepál, is found an undulating region, culminating in a range of hills which are an outcrop of the Himalayas. This tract is of high average fertility, well watered and more fitted to sustain healthy human life than Bengal proper. On the right bank of the Ganges we have a continuation of the alluvial tracts bounded on the south by a mountainous region, a part of the great Central Indian Plateau. The Sone is here the only navigable river of any importance, and its value to commerce has been lessened by the creation of a system of canals. The other rivers are mere hill streams; their general course being from the southern uplands towards the Ganges, and of little importance to navigation. But in the Sone Canals trade finds compensation for the want of rivers. The navigable channels are 218 miles in length, the irrigation canals 148¾, and the village distributaries 1,195 miles. They command an area of 1,728,509 acres, which they absolutely protect from famine risks. The traffic on these canals exceeds 105,000 tons per annum, the estimated value of the cargoes being Rx. 590,000, and it is steadily increasing. Still greater progress has been shown of late years as to areas irrigated. In 1881-82 they were 178,075 acres, while in 1891-92 they had reached the extraordinary total of 447,602. The year was one of very deficient and ill-distributed rainfall, and hence the great demand for water: the latter varies inversely with the annual quantity of rain, which averages 43·26 inches; and in 1885-86 the year of the decade, which most nearly approached the normal, the area irrigated was 332,570. The net revenue in 1885-86 was Rx. 47,864, while in 1890-91, when the rainfall was 52·23 inches, it fell to Rx. 2,701. But of the great and increasing popularity of the canals there can be no doubt: everywhere the cry is for water: and the Sone, from which the supply is taken, would suffice for a mere fraction of the demands. This new departure, which is a legacy of the famine of 1874, has revolutionized the cultivation of South Bihár. Before the inception of canals the raiyat was dependent on wells, and artificial catchment basins, formed by erecting semi-circular embankments termed *aharas*, curved so as to intercept the drainage of the country. The manual labour involved by the first method was immense, and the second depended largely for its utility on the rainfall. Crops requiring large supplies of water, technically called "wet cultivation," such as rice

Canals.

and sugarcane, were precarious, and the raiyats depended on a vast variety of inferior ones, which yielded him a scanty return. The area under *kharif*, which embraces these wet crops, increased from 408,595 acres in 1881-82, to 211,726 in 1891-92; while the *rabi* or cold-weather crops were 57,589 acres at the earlier, and 51,318 at the later epoch. The advantages of canals in giving immunity from famine and lightening the raiyat's toil, can hardly be overrated; but they are purchased at the expense of serious drawbacks: cultivation is made too easy. The raiyat labours no more far into the night at his water-lift, or keeps bullocks exclusively for well-irrigation. By merely turning a tap, so to speak, he can regulate his water to a nicety. He has, therefore, lost in some measure the virility and courage which showed so conspicuously during the Mutiny. His physique is no longer what it was, and habits of indolence, to which the oriental nature is so prone, have grown upon him. And then there can be no doubt whatever that the interception of the drainage by the canals, and the absence of proper outlets for surplus water, have made the soil of the tract under influence more or less water-logged, and so encouraged the spread of malaria. The only canals on the north or left bank of the Ganges are in the Saran district, which is already better supplied with water than any district in Bihár. It is surrounded by the Ganges, Ghagra, and Gandak, which carry an immense traffic, and scored by countless water-courses, whose banks are above the level of the country. It is subject, therefore, to inundations, and not a fair field for irrigation. Including distribution and supply channels, the length of the system is only 47·23 miles; the area irrigated in 1891-92, 865 acres.

Communications.

149. The communications by railway have vastly developed during the last decade. North Bihar is now traversed in every direction by 392 miles of railway, a part of the Bengal and North-Western System. It joins hands with the Eastern Bengal State Railway, and thus the labour districts, as they are called, the tea plantations of Assam, the Duars and Darjeeling, are connected with these congested tracts. On the west the line merges into the railway system, of Upper India. South Bihár has 147 miles of the main line of the East Indian Railway, and a branch, 60 miles in length, connecting it with the capital of the Gaya district, a famous place of pilgrimage. The total mileage of railways is 599, or one running mile of railway to 39 square miles of area. With a large road cess income, cheap labour, and a plentiful supply of nodulous limestone, one of the best of materials, the Patna Division is better supplied with roads than any other portion of the province.

Trade.

150. Trade has thus greater facilities in this Division than in any part of Bengal, the eastern districts alone excepted, and the advantage to the cultivators of cheap communication and a choice of markets, cannot be overrated. Some idea of its volume is given by the fact that in 1890-91 the movements of goods by rail on the Bihár section of the railway system was 534,000 tons of exports and 230,000 tons of imports. The imports into the Division are pulses and food-grains, salt, spices, piece-goods, kerosine oil, oilseeds, coal, iron, and hides. A considerable increase is noticeable as regards the first, and a decrease in that of salt. Owing to unfavourable harvests imports of piece-goods, too, were reduced from 13,500 to 8,700 tons. In the absence of any adequate registering machinery these figures must be accepted as mere approximations to the actuals, or rather, perhaps, as indicating changes in the current of trade. The rise in imports of food-grains, and the heavy drop in salt, piece-goods, and kerosine oil, indicate a diminution in the purchasing power of the masses. Exports include rice, wheat, pulses, oilseeds, indigo, sugar, hides, and clarified butter. A very heavy decrease is noticeable in the case of food-grains: the exports from the Patna district alone having declined from 42,000 to 10,000 tons. The only exceptions are the southern district of Shahabad and the northern one of Saran, in which the exports rose from 20,000 to 32,000 tons. This upward movement, in spite of a great advance in price, is due to the purchases of a firm of Greek merchants operating for the English market. Exports of sugar, too, rose from 15,000 to 18,000 tons, owing to a large increase in the yield in South Bihár. The northern districts maintain a flourishing trade with Nepal, and a better system of registration renders it possible to gauge it accurately. The exports of food-grains, indeed, fell from 51,000 to 30,000 tons. Oilseeds remained nearly stationary at about 9,000 tons, but the exports of salt rose from 1,400 to 3,700 tons, and of piece-goods from a value of Rx. 140,718 to Rx. 471,314. This trade, under the stimulating influence of the Bengal and North-Western Railway, has assumed proportions which few would have deemed possible a few years back, and which have hardly experienced a check in a year of low harvest returns and high prices of necessaries. Such has been 1891-92; and coming, as it has, after two unfavourable years in succession, it has severely tried the resources of every class.

Crops.

151. The average since 1889-90, taking 100 as representing an average crop, have been for—

Wheat	...	...	...	...	62
Pulses	...	...	...	...	69
Rice	...	...	...	...	70
Sugarcane	...	...	...	...	69
Cold-weather crops	...	...	...	...	59

The year 1891-92 was one of deficient and badly-distributed rainfall, the divisional average having been 28·55 as compared with a normal of 45·13 inches. As in 1873, the year prior

to the Bihár famine, the rains ceased prematurely in August, and during the two succeeding months the fall was less than half the average, the result was ruin to the *bhadoi* harvest of inferior grains, most valuable in South Bihár, and to the great rice crop in areas unprotected by canals; drought succeeded which lasted from October to February, and did immense damage to the cold-weather crops, opium, sugarcane, oilseeds, potatoes, and pulses. It is doubtful whether the harvests all round exceeded 50 per cent. of an average outturn, and but for the magnificent canal system of South Bihár, the failure would have been still more complete. Relief measures on a small scale were found necessary in Muzaffarpur during March and April, when 3,206 persons of the labouring class were employed on repairing roads and excavating tanks at a total cost of Rs. 1,183.

Famine relief.

152. The cultivating class in this Division have a resource unknown elsewhere in the cultivating of opium. Those who undertake to do so receive allowances in cash from the Department proportionate to the area which they undertake to plant, and these advances are made at a time when money is most coveted. A comparison of this vast industry in the opening and the closing years of the decade is not without interest at a time when it is sought to rob the Bihár cultivators of this valuable assistance. In 1881-82 the area under poppy in the Bihár agency was 287,738 acres, giving 1,831 tons of crude opium. The number of raiyats who received advances for growing poppy was 702,014, the amount advanced having been Rx. 992,588, an average of Rs. 14-1 apiece. In the year ending August 1891, the quantity of land under opium had fallen to 254,970 acres, and the produce to 1,435 tons, and the number of raiyats who received advances was 654,870, and the amount advanced Rx. 840,672, or Rs. 12 each the average. Thus the tillage of this highly valuable crop is on the decline in Bihár. Cultivators have had to contend with three bad seasons in succession, and are beginning to lose heart. There is a marked tendency to withdraw from an industry so precarious and to substitute the more robust cereals. A powerful stimulus is given by the high prices of food-grains to this movement. Sugarcane is another crop growing immensely in importance. So great is the necessity of water for its vigorous growth, that its cultivation before the era of canals involved almost prohibitive labour on well-irrigation. The cultivation has tripled in South Bihár during the last 20 years, and at least doubled in the rest of Bengal. The exports of crude sugar in 1891-92 were estimated at 16,200 tons, and the local consumption is enormously greater. But a still more powerful stimulus has been given to this industry throughout India by the introduction of iron roller-mills worked by bullock power, invented in 1874 by Messrs. Thomson and Mylne, grantees of a large confiscated estate at Bihia in South Bihár. Some years elapsed ere their great superiority over the rude machines in use was recognized. The inventors, too, had to contend against wholesale piracy and innumerable defects in the patent laws, and it is to be feared that their profits have not of late years been commensurate with the labour and expense attending their operations. The popularity of the Bihia mills is now firmly established. The old-fashioned appliances which necessiated the cutting up of the cane and extracted a mere fraction of the juice by a churning process, are no longer seen. No less than 450,000 of these mills are now in operation, besides countless native-made imitations. The saving to this cultivator is not less than Rs 50,00,000 annually. There are few Anglo-Indians who have done more for Indian agriculture than Messrs. Thomson and Mylne; and their estate of Bihia, which 30 years ago was a trackless jungle, is now cultivated like a garden, and supports a thriving and contented peasantry. Its area is 27,620 acres, and the population as ascertained by the census of 1891 was 49,521, or 714 to the square mile.

Opium.

The Bihia mills.

153. The crop failures of the last three years have exercised a marked effect on the prices of food. But other and more prominent factors are at work. The low rate of exchange has stimulated exports of grain to Europe, and the movement of wheat from tracts of this Division where the losses had been especially severe was greater in 1891-92 than in the preceding year. At the commencement of the hot season the general range was greater than at any other period since the famine of 1874. The number of pounds of wheat obtainable for a rupee in 1889-90 was 29. It fell to 27lbs. in the following year, and to 25lbs. in 1891-92. The corresponding figures for rice were 34, 31 and 24, and for pulses 44, 35, and 36. In the towns coarse rice sold at little more than 20lbs. per rupee. The deficiency in stock there was met by importations from the North-Western Provinces and Bengal Proper, but for his personal requirements the raiyat had to fall back on private stores. Taught by bitter experience he now keeps large stocks, and gains enormously by selling that which is not wanted for home consumption.

Prices.

154. The Patna Division passed into British hands on the cession of the *Dewani*, or right to realize provincial revenue by the Emperor Shah Alam after the decisive battle of Buxar in 1765. At the time of the Permanent Settlement (1793) the present districts of Saran and Champaran were one, and Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga formed a district under the title of Tirhut. To judge by the balance sheets given in separate supplement to the fifth report from the Select Committee appointed by the House of Commons in 1812, these districts must have been heavily assessed at the Permanent Settlement. Population was then probably less than a third of its present total, and the incidence of taxation far severer than at present. The number of estates in the rent-rolls is 5,818; four square miles apiece on the average. Tenures, however, are very numerous. There are 139,574, an average of 107 acres, showing an excessive division of land. The gross revenue and cesses amount to Rx. 1,071,222 or 10 annas 10 pie per head, and 11 annas

Land revenue.

3 pies per acre of area. Taxation is evidently too light to exercise an influence adverse to agricultural progress. Nor are the profits of the immense trade of Bihár severely affected by the income-tax. The number of assessees is 13,970, the annual demand Rx. 38,893, giving a proportion of one assessee to 113 inhabitants, and an average payment of Rs. 27-7 apiece.

Income-tax.

155. The Tenancy Act has not as yet had much direct influence. Less recourse was had in 1891-92 than the previous year to the provisions regarding the registration of tenures, the mutation of rent paid in kind, and the appraisement of produce, in such cases. This fact is the more remarkable because *bhaoli* rents, as they are called, are very common in Bihár. Under this system the landlord and tenants are partners in the cultivation. Strictly speaking, they should share the cost and the produce; but, as a matter of fact, the landlord generally contrives to evade his share of this responsibility Thus endless bickerings are the rule, and the apportionment of the crop leaves a wide door open to fraud and oppression. Another constant source of friction is the tendency on the part of landlords to enlarge their "home-farms," *zirats* as they are called, at the expense of the raiyats' holdings. In North Bihár the estates are large, and some are of vast proportions: the pressure of population is so great, and the competition for land is so keen, that the landlords have the upper hand. In the south, the existence of occupancy rights and their transferable nature have been conceded by immemorial custom, and the raiyats generally have the advantage. The great evil here is the existence of a large class of intermediate tenure-holders, who are often most oppressive to inferior raiyats. In the very fertile area on the right bank of the Ganges, rents have been screwed up to an extraordinary height, and the unhappy tiller of the soil is stripped of his fair profits, while the superior landlord's share is very small. On the whole, the relations between landlord and tenant are marked by an absence of cordiality which occasionally becomes open warfare.

Landlord and tenant.

156. Better things cannot be hoped until fair play is given to the Tenancy Act by a survey and record of rights of the entire Province. A beginning is now being made in the cadastral survey of North Bihár, which, it is hoped, will be completed in five years. This great measure, a necessary complement of the Permanent Settlement, will remove all incentives to discord, and render good management possible.

Cadastral survey.

157. I have alluded to the pressure of the population on land in North Bihár. It is quite as great in the culturable area in the south. The Hill Territory must be deducted in calculating the amounts available for cultivation. It affords pasturage to innumerable cattle and much valuable forest produce; but a large proportion can never be subject to the plough. This tract, and that in the north of Champaran, may be fairly estimated to contain 750,000 acres. Deducting it from the total area of the Division, 15,154,560 acres, and allowing 15 per cent. in respect of urban and village sites, rivers, roads and other barren tracts, we get an area available for cultivation of 12,244,000 acres in round figures. The area under tillage and pasturage is estimated at 11,120,000 acres, and there are, therefore, left only 1,124,000 culturable acres. In point of fact, so far back as 1872, when Sir W. Hunter's Statistical Account was compiled, there was but a small margin open to the settler in the north of Champaran and in Gaya; and cultivation has certainly advanced in this long interval. The outlook in the Patna Division, when the extraordinary growth of population is considered, is by no means a hopeful one. The numbers as ascertained by the census of 1881 were 15,060,993. These have grown in 10 years to 15,811,014, an increase of 747,070, or 4·9 per cent. The figures for the several districts show that South Bihár is economically in a sounder condition than the north. Patna added 17,170 to her population, and has 852 inhabitants to the square mile; Gaya shows the still smaller increase of 13,649, and has but 453. The population of Shahabad has grown by 110,690, but it still has only 472 to the square mile. Both these districts, however, have extensive highlands which are unfit for cultivation. In the north we have Champaran in much the same condition: the increase was 137,857, and the ratio of population to area is 526 to the square mile. But Darbhanga added 171,459 to her population, and has 840 to the square mile; in Muzaffarpur the figures are 129,385 and 902, and Saran 969,811 and 950. The state of things, in a land where the whole population is practically bound to the soil, and where rents and manufactures are in a rudimentary stage, is one which the statesman must regard with serious misgivings. Several factors are at work to bring about a rapid advance in population. The soil of Bihár is above the average in fertility. Irrigated rice, for instance, gives an average of 1,392lbs. per acre, while no other Division in Bengal can show more than 1,131: and Chota Nagpur must be content with 512. Wheat yields 1,387lbs. as compared with 984 in Bhagalpur; tobacco 1,148lbs. as against 783lbs., the average for the rest of the province. Then we have an entire absence of moral restraint, and a religion which enunciates the duty of early marriage and the begetting of children. Whereas in England the average age of women at marriage is increasing yearly, and the period during which child-bearing is possible is gradually shortened; in Bengal cohabitation takes place immediately on the attainment of puberty in the female.

Waste lands.

Consus, 1891.

158. Mortality from famine is rendered nearly impossible by our administrative system, and by the vast improvement in communications. Diseases have been hitherto inoperative as a check on the tendency of population to outstrip the means of subsistence. 1891 was a year of comparative

Public health.

unhealthiness, cholera and fever having been unusually prevalent, but the mortality from cholera was 3·13 per mille as compared with 3·26 for Bengal; and that from fever 16·28 as compared with 18·94. The advantage of Bihár was at least 3 per 1,000, say 45,400 less annually. Zymotic diseases in Bihár seem to be on the increase—a fact due partly to overcrowding, and partly to the saturation of the soil by canals. Many villages in this Division would be considered a town in Bengal proper, for the tendency of the people is towards aggregation, and instead of tiny hamlets, each nestling within its own belt of trees, we have a main street with many narrow and ill-ventilated side lanes. The filth and squalor are appalling, and the Bihari is even a grosser offender against sanitary land than his neighbour in Bengal. The deterioration of the public health must increase in a direct ratio with population. It is noteworthy that 1891, which was a year of scanty rainfall was particularly unhealthy. Malarious fever, cholera, and influenza were very fatal, and the mortality from all causes rose from 23·15 in 1890 to 24·57. The figures for 1881-82 are 15·46 only, which would indicate that Bihár is now nearly twice as unhealthy as it was ten years back. The corresponding statistics for Bengal are 26·94 and 18·99. It is admitted on all sides that both are far below actuals, and that a great improvement in registration has followed the increased energy with which the Sanitary Department is administered. But making every allowance for this factor, there can be little doubt that Bihár is not so healthy as it was a decade back.

Education.

159. It is useless to expect much from education as a factor in instilling sexual prudence. It has indeed an indirect effect in that direction, for an educated man has a higher standard of comfort and self-respect than one who is wholly ignorant, and he shrinks from placing himself or his children on a lower level than that to which he has painfully climbed. Bihár is still lamentably behind Bengal in facilities for gaining knowledge. While the Chittagong Division has a school to 1·62 square miles, Dacca 1 to 1·67, the Presidency exeluding Calcutta) 1 to 2·01, Burdwan 1 to 1·28 square miles; Patna has a school to 3·59 square miles only, and is superior in this respect only to Bhagalpur, Rajshahi (North Bengal), and Chota Nagpur. But great strides have been made during the period under review. In 1881-82 the Patna Division had only 3 236 schools of all classes with 60,374 scholars, or 1 school in 7·31 square miles, and 1 scholar in 25 boys of a school-going age. In 1891-92 the schools of all classes had risen to 6,605 and of pupils to 167,232, giving one school to every 3·59 square miles of area, and one pupil to every nine boys of school-going age. The greatest increase has taken place in primary schools; and it is especially noteworthy that while in 1881-82 there were but nine girls' schools with 250 pupils, 10 years later there were 2·26 with 3,801. The growth, insignificant as the figures are compared with the gigantic population concerned, is full of hope for the future.

Rural well-being.

160. The material condition of the lower classes of the Patna Division varies inversely with the pressure of population on the soil. But relative fertility and advantages for locomotion and trade are also factors which cannot be disregarded. South Bihár, embracing Patna, Gaya and Shahabad, with a population of 535 to the square mile, is, as a whole, better off than the North with its 785 to the same area. But Saran, in spite of its enormous average of 950, has means of communication so splendid, and cultivators so adroit and industrious, that the standard of comfort is higher than it is in Muzaffarpur, with 902, and Darbhanga, with 840 to the square mile. Champaran to the north is best off of all. The soil is more fertile than that of the neighbouring districts; there is still a reserve of land available for cultivation, and the population is as yet only 526 to a square mile. To obtain a clear view of the domestic economy of the masses here, it is necessary to collate the information gained by the enquiries of 1888 with the latest divisional report, which records the effects of three years in succession of poor harvests. In the Patna district a minute investigation was made as to the circumstances of an agricultural population of 2,708, living on the produce of 5,427 acres. The average area of each holding was five acres, but 264 or 23 per cent. of the whole represented families with less than 2·5 acres, who were forced to eke out a living by working for others, and 460 or 17 per cent. were landless labourers. The average produce per acre of food-grains is 1,250lbs. Hence the gross produce per holding of 5 acres is 6,250lbs. Assuming half to be out-goings by way of rent, Rs 5-6 per acre, irrigation rates, seed, labour at harvest time and food and renewal of bullocks, we get a net produce of 3,125lbs. Now for the out-goings. Each family averages five and consumes 1lb. 5 ounces of grain per diem ahead. The total daily consumption is 6lbs. 11 ounces, or 2,440lbs. annually. This would give two substantial meals of rice and curry-stuff and coarse grain in cakes as a morning repast. Thus there is available for other necessaries 685lbs., which at 28lbs. per rupee, the average market price for food produce, will give Rs. 24-5 per annum. Out of this the raiyat has to provide clothes on a scale of Rs. 3 for a male, Rs. 4 for a female, and Re. 1 for a child, total Rs. 10. Salt, 50lbs., Rs. 2-8; spices, condiments, and tobacco, Rs. 7; and repairs to house, Rs. 5; total Rs. 24-8. Thus a fairly comfortable living is gained in the Patna Division by 60 per cent. of the agricultural population cultivating five acres and upwards. The lower class who till 2·5 acres and less can earn Rs. 21 by their land, and net only 1,560lbs. The amount required for home consumption cannot be much less than the higher class raiyats' demands; for hard work is impossible on a lower average than 1lb. 5 ounces of food daily. Place this irreducible minimum of subsistence for a family of five at 1,792lbs., and we get a deficit of 232lbs., the money value of which, at 28lbs. per rupee, is Rs. 8-2. The lowest

expenditure on clothes, spices, house repairs, and luxuries is Rs 10 annually. Hence Rs. 18-2 must be produced by day labour, or the collection and sale of cow-dung for fuel. But the average earnings of a man of this hybrid class, and his wife, apart from their holding, are not more than Rs. 12. Hence there is a deficit of Rs. 6-2 in the family budget, which must be covered by reducing the number of meals to one during a portion of the year. This is between March and September, which is the interval between the cold-weather harvests and that known as *bhadoi*, consisting of coarse grain and Indian corn. The pressure is still greater when the holding is less than two and-a-half acres, and, on the whole, it may be assumed that 23 per cent. of the population in Patna must be content with one full meal a day during a large portion of the year. This calculation applies to those portions of the Gaya district which are beyond the canal sphere, *i.e.*, to all but the western and north-western tracts. It applies, too, to similar tracts in Shahabad, especially those to the west. In the protected area the productiveness of the land is greater, 1,400lbs. of grain per acre being the average outturn. Paying crops, such as sugarcane and potatoes, are grown on a vast scale, and the cost of cultivation is far lower. Taking these districts as a whole, I doubt whether 20 per cent. of the agricultural population are ill-fed. The margin for hoarding against a rainy day and stock available for export are larger. While exports from Patna fell enormously in 1891-92, those from Shahabad actually rose. In Patna, however, there is a spirit of self-help which one looks for in vain in the other districts of the south. Throughout the day, writes the Collector, the fields are thronged with workers, and when the water-supply was bad, the villagers jointly and individually dug wells or water-courses, doing their best to improve matters, while the children tended cattle, and the women gathered crops, and cleared the fields of weeds, so that no moisture or nourishment should be lost. An equal degree of industry is not met with in other districts of South Bihár. In Gaya the rice harvest of 1890 was favourable, and the cold-weather crops not so complete a failure as elsewhere. The landowning class suffered but little, and the mercantile sections profited by scarcity. The cultivators exhibited as much thriftlessness as ever, and did not begin to curtail expenditure on drink and other luxuries till after the paddy had been reaped. They showed, however, great adaptability in the matter of food, exchanging wheat and rice for cheap millets and pulses, and these again for the flowers of *mahua* tree and other jungle produce as pressure rose. In Shahabad, in spite of partial failures, the agricultural population were fairly prosperous. The class of landless labourer is small, and the great bulk of the raiyats enjoy a fixity of tenure, which leaves them a fair share of their produce. The canals, railway and roads place every part, except the hilly tracts in the south, within easy reach of markets; and canal irrigation renders one-third of the population independent of the seasons. Opium advances were most valuable in South Bihár. They average Rs. 11 per cultivator, and this supply makes all the difference between comfort and penury in thousands of families. Indebtedness is well-nigh universal in South Bihár, but I have no statistics as to its amount It must be borne in mind, however, that this does not necessarily imply poverty in an agricultural community where civilization is at a low ebb, the masses have not the sense to do their own saving. The money-lender does it for them and charges pretty highly for this function. In ordinary years the produce of the soil supports zamindars, raiyats, labourers and money-lenders: and but for the latters' help, bad years would be far more disastrous than they are.

North Bihár varies much than the South in economic conditions. Champaran has the advantage of better soil and less pressure. Opium here has great importance, the advances to cultivators exceeding Rx. 225,000. Indigo in good years is a valuable resource. Where the plant is cultivated by the raiyats and not (as is often the case) by the planter himself, the remuneration is Rs. 15 per acre, and this with the expense of manufacturing added, puts Rx. 180,000 yearly at the disposal of the lower classes. It is confined to North Bihár, and is nearly dead on the right bank of the Ganges. In Champaran the outturn in 1891-92 was 890 tons with Rx. 414,000. The cultivator's lot here is not unenviable. Except in case of the superior castes, every member of a cultivator's family labours in the fields. The majority have two full meals. At dawn they eat parched pulse, cooked sweet-potatoes, or some of the rice left over from their evening repast. At noon they have a meal of cakes of various coarse grains, according to the season, or baked flour. At night the family gather round smoking platters of rice and vegetable, pulse, and occasionally fish. Darbhanga and Muzaffarpur were, till recent years, included in the vast district of Tirhut, and may be treated together. The population is extraordinarily high, and the soil less productive than that of Champaran on the north, and Saran in the south of the citra Gangetic tract. The lot of the agriculturist here is not a happy one. The well-being of the population must depend on the year's harvests, for there is but a slight margin after the cravings of nature have been gratified. 60 per cent. of raiyats in a selected tract in 1888 were found to be in possession of holdings of less than 1·3 acres, while we have seen that five is the lowest area that affords a decent subsistence. This section, therefore, closely approximates in standard of living to the large class of landed labourers, treated of in South Bihár. Cakes of coarse millets and Indian corn in the day time, and rice at night, form the bulk of the people's food, with sweet-potatoes and other roots and vegetable in the season. Fish, too, is fairly cheap. Rents are very high, and the competition for land is excessive in this area, where, too, the raiyats are perpetually harassed by greedy landlords' efforts to enhance. It is clearly not a day too soon that the cadastral survey has commenced in North Bihár. Saran, for reasons already stated, is far better off, and its people's standard of comfort is superior to that maintained on the other side of the Ganges. The classes which are in the worst plight are the very small zamindars and the high

caste cultivators. It is significant of their character that the number of instruments of sale and mortgage of landed properties was Rx. 28,053 in Muzaffarpur during the five years ending 1884-85, and 71,037 during the last half of the period under review. They are too proud to work, and must pay more for menial service than in previous days. They have, indeed, greater facilities for disposing of their produce than formerly, but the profits go into the pockets of the traders. These men are mostly Marwaris from Central India, and to the business aptitude of the Jew they add the penuriousness of the French peasant. They are thriving as no other section of the community thrives. The railways have given a powerful stimulus to trade, and their granaries, bursting with grain, are rising near every station. They are more than suspected of combining to keep up the price of food, and they manage to evade taxation as no other class can do. The traders and money-lenders form the bulk of the purchasers of landed property. Lawyers, too, prosper amain, but they are handicapped by excessive competition. Nearly all hold land, or have some interest therein.

Labourers.

161. The agricultural labourers of Bihár have profited more largely by railways and improved communications than the class immediately above them. They have begun to travel far and wide in search of employment, and indigo-planters speak of the difficulty in procuring labour, as compared with times 10 or 15 years back. The wholly landless amongst them are comparatively rare, the census giving 198,068, or 14 per cent. of the population. Of these 122,153 are found in the Patna district. These are paid in kind, the usual allowance given them being 4 to 5lbs. of the coarsest grain—value 1½ annas, and they do not find employment for more than eight or nine months in the year. The earnings of a male adult would be about Rs. 24, and his wife Rs. 6—a total of Rs. 30, which would give two adults and as many children a full allowance of cheap food, clothing, and a hut to cover them. The supply in Patna clearly exceeds the demand. In Shahabad and Gaya, labourers, *Kamias* as they are called, are often mere serfs. They are not by custom allowed to work for any one but their master, except with his permission. Twice a day the food of this section and their families is served out to them. Eight pounds of rice or parched corn meal is considered the daily allowance, and the surplus is bartered for clothes and tobacco. This servitude rests in the assumption that the *Kamia* is indebted to his master for money advanced for marriage expenses, which is by usage rendered in personal service. This small and diminishing class is degraded beneath the low level of the Bihár peasants but it is certainly never in want of food In North Bihár the demand for labour exceeds the supply. Wages, money, or its equivalent in grain, are 2 annas per diem for males. 1·5 annas for females, and 1 anna for children. Thus, a man with a wife and a child over 8 years of age will earn 4·5 annas per diem, or nearly Rs. 5 per mensem. If he gets employment for eight months, he will make Rs. 40, which is enough to keep him in tolerable comfort throughout the year. The tendency of wages in North Bihár is upwards, and, on the whole, the labourer is better off than the cultivator of the soil.

General condition of the landed classes.

162 A general summary of the conditions of this vast section of the community in Bihár reveal the fact that 80 per cent. eat two meals a day, and are only reduced to serious plights after two successive crop failures. The staying power of the peasantry has increased greatly during the last 15 years owing to the vast improvement in communication, and by the construction of irrigation canals. The worst off are the high-caste farmers, whose pride forbids them to labour, still less to allow their women-folk to do so, for they pay more clearly for labour, and the benefit from enhanced prices is intercepted by middlemen. The "submerged tenth" consists of labourers in the Patna district, and cultivators elsewhere farming less than 2·5 acres; they number about 20 per cent. of the population, and can only command two meals per diem during a portion of the year; but the jungle products—*mahua* flowers and mangoes—are potent succedanea at these times. The parts of south Bihár which are worst off are the north and the east of Gaya, the south of Patna, the west of Shahabad, with an area of 3,574 square miles and a population of 1,800,000. In the north the corresponding tract is the old district of Tirhut, now Darbhanga and Muzaffarpur, with an area of 6,338 square miles, and a population of 5,513,000. In these and other congested tracts every legitimate means should be taken to encourage emigration.

II.—LANDLESS CLASSES.

Artizans.

163. The artizans in Patna Division number about five per cent. of the population, and are in a better plight than the agriculturists. Blacksmiths, carpenters, masons, and thatchers earn 4 to 8 annas per diem, according to their skill, say an average of Rs. 12 per mensem, which is more than sufficient to keep a family of five in comfort. The wages of these classes show a tendency to rise. A really competent workman would make much more. A blacksmith in the Shahabad district, whose industry and inventive genius are far beyond the common, earns Rs. 80 per mensem with ease. Indigo is an important industry in North Bihár. It is under European supervision, and still holds its own. The outturn in 1891-92 was 3,100 tons, valued at Rx. 1,504,800. It gives employment to at least 105,000 persons, and has a powerful influence on the labour market. Saltpetre was produced in North Bihár to the extent of 9,900 tons. Unlike Bengal, this Division was once the seat of empire, and beautiful and curious industries survive to

Manufactures.

show that the Indian's hand has not lost its cunning. Patna heads the list with its weavers embroiderers on calico, and workers in brass or iron, who are all thriving. The arts of the glass-blower and perfumer are yearly growing in importance, and a new industry has been introduced in the shape of reeling imported thread by machinery. Lac is produced in Gaya to the extent of 700 tons, with Rx. 48,000. Crude sugar is made on a vast scale in the irrigated tracts of this Division. Tobacco made here is known throughout India. Weavers are not ruined in South Bihár as in Bengal proper. The lower classes prefer indigenous to the imported piece-goods, owing to their superior wearing qualities. Muhammadans of this class, however, are flocking to the European mills in and near Calcutta, where they earn high wages. In Shahabad the sugar industry is on a most satisfactory basis, and the refined as well as the crude article is turned out in yearly increasing quantities in the canal-protected areas. Paper-making here and in Gaya, formerly an important industry, is being killed by English competition, and the craftsmen are reduced to a sad plight. Carpets of superior texture are made in this and the Gaya district, and beautiful art pottery in Sasaram. The indigenous industries of the north are of small importance, for there the whole population is agricultural. Some oil-mills under European management, started within the last 10 years, are flourishing, and this industry bids fair to assume large dimensions. This almost entire dependence on the soil in North Bihár is much to be regretted, and it is our bounden duty to foster manufactures.

Urban population.

164. As might be expected in an agricultural community, the urban population of Bihár bears but a small proportion to the total. The tendency of village population, indeed, is towards aggregation, and townlets with 1,000 to 3,000 inhabitants are far more numerous in proportion to the total population than in Bengal. But Bihár has only 23 towns of more than 10,000 inhabitants, their total population is 797,397, or five per cent. of the whole. Eleven towns have more than 20,000 inhabitants, the aggregate being 631,644, just four per cent.; eight of these show an increase of population to the extent of 36,831, and three a decrease to that of 10,478. Thus the net increase of the strictly urban community was 10,471 or 4·16 per cent. Patna was among the decadent towns, losing 5,462 on a population of 170,654; but Dinapore, which may be considered a suburb, embracing the military cantonments, increased by 6,526, so that this loss is really a shifting of the urban population. The only other town which showed a material decline is Hajipur, which decreased by 3,591 in a population of 25,078. The registration of births and deaths, if adequately performed, would throw some light on these fluctuations, but so perfunctory has been the work of the municipalities in this respect, that it has been found necessary to take it from their hands and place it in those of the police. Not a single town in Bihár possesses a pure water-supply, or adequate drainage. The sanitary conditions are even worse than those prevailing in Bengal, and death-rates are very high indeed. Some amelioration has resulted to the condition of the lower classes in towns from the construction of railways and navigable canals,

Excise.

but there can be no doubt that they are suffering to some extent from the present high prices of food.

165. The excise revenue in the Patna Division offers a surer indication of the prosperity of the lower classes than in Bengal proper. Their religion and social sanctions restrain the consumption of intoxicating liquor, and the bulk of the customers of the spirit shops are prostitutes, who are habitually intemperate, and the lower strata of the middle class, who imitate their English masters only in their follies and vices. In Bihár labourers and lower caste cultivators are all fond of extremely weak spirits distilled from crude sugar and *mahua* flowers, hot from the still, which cost 1·25 annas per reputed quart bottle. So excessive was the consumption in the towns, that Government was led to revert to a system of distillation under supervision, and the levy of duty on the quantity of spirits actually passing from the stillhead into consumption, for one in which the manufacturer bought at auction the exclusive right to vend spirits within a given area. It was self-evident that under the latter method the vendor had the more powerful incentives to promote sale. With central distilleries the same motives were not at work, and consumption has declined in certain areas to a marked extent since its introduction. Further, restrictions were placed in the size of fermenting vessels, and inspections are far more frequent than they were ten years back. Hence the revenue from country spirits has declined from Rx. 163,716 to Rx. 129,061. It is satisfactory to observe that the proceeds to the State from the sale of *tari*, the fermented juice of the palm tree, has risen in this interval from Rx. 40,524 to Rx. 54,592. Only 7,568lbs. of opium paid duty to Government, but as every district in the Division produces the drug, smuggling is inevitable. The quantity of best opium sold has trebled in ten years. Ganja, the stupefying leaves of *cannabis indica*, Indian hemp, grown in a circumscribed tract in Rajshahi, was sold in this Division to the extent of 65 tons in 1881-82, and of 57 tons in 1891-92, but as the duty has been raised in the interval, the revenue has increased from Rx. 33,673 to Rx. 43,861. The gross revenue from excise was Rx. 234,742, barely 2 annas 6 pie per head of the population. There has been a decrease of ·05 per head during the decade, but this is solely owing to a subordination of fiscal interests to those of public morals and happiness.

Emigration.

166. The Government is fully alive to the necessity of relieving the pressure of population in the congested parts of Bihár by promoting a movement towards cultivable wastes in other provinces. In 1888, Mr. P. Nolan, then Secretary to the Local Government, was despatched on a mission to Burma to confer with high officers there as to the suitability of that province as a field for emigration. In consonance with the recommendations made in

his report, special facilities have been offered to Bihár emigrants in the shape of a reduction of one-half of the passage-money between Calcutta and Rangoon, and the offer of favourable terms to capitalists willing to appropriate tracts of cultivable waste in Burma for Bihár settlers. In the following year the Director of Agriculture and Land Records was deputed to Burma, heading a committee representing the various interests involved. Rules were framed, in concert with the local authorities, to govern the grant of land on very favourable terms to settlers from Bihár and Chota Nagpur, and a vast mass of information was collected bearing on the rainfall, rates of wages, and area available for emigrants. Summaries of this information in the vernacular have been widely circulated in the congested districts of Bihár and Bengal. The pioneers of this new movement are the Bihia firm, whose estate in South Bihár has already been referred to as a model of good management. Mr. Mylne, the senior partner, has obtained a grant of 15,000 acres in the Selong valley, 106 miles above Rangoon and in close proximity to the line of railway. The soil is a rich virgin loam, capable of producing crops of paddy at least thrice as heavy as those produced in South Bihár, while the sugarcane grown there is quite phenomenal in size and quality. The labours and expense of irrigation is rendered needless by a rainfall of 120 inches. The climate, though moist, has been found quite as well suited to Biharis as their native land. The Director of Agriculture and his committee visited the Settlement in 1889, and found 30 Bihia families cultivating 150 acres with success, 43 families comprising 191 individuals have lately been sent from the Bihia estate to these tracts, and it is satisfactory to hear that they were induced to make the move by the accounts of successful enterprize received from the previous emigrants. What it cost these people to tear themselves from their native village, only those who know the deep-rooted attachment of Biharis to their home can conceive. The movement has now passed the experimental stage. Mr. L. Mylne, writes :—

"We are satisfied that the scheme of settling Bihia cultivators on the grant will be a success. So far it has been amply proved that most of the crops the raiyats are accustomed to grow here can be raised there; that the journey of five or six days by rail and steamer does not deter the people from going backwards and forwards, and that the climate suits them very well. As soon as a certain number of families take deep root on the grant and put by money, as they are bound to do after the second year's work, we think the stream of emigration will be as large as we can well deal with. At present it is not easy to induce men with large and increasing families, small unexpanding holdings, and heavy indebtedness, to leave their homes. It is difficult to understand what, under such circumstances, the attraction to remain is. We have cultivators here who, not having sufficiently large holdings, take lands in neighbouring villages as sub-tenants, on what are practically rack rents. We have faith, however, in the example and experience of successful settlers undermining the short-sighted attachment to an overpopulated locality."

Other applications for grants in Burma are now under consideration; and so lately as November 1891, the Director of Agriculture, accompanied by Mr. Mackay, of the firm of Mackinnon, Mackenzie and Company, proceeded on a tour in Bihár for the purpose of conferring with District Magistrates as to the possibility of promoting temporary emigration to Burma. It was pointed out that at the very time when labourers from North Bihár proceed to East Bengal in search of employment, there is an immense demand for harvesters to get in the rice crop of Burma, and that later on the rice-mills of Rangoon would employ many thousands. Leaflets conveying this information were circulated, and an attempt was made by a private individual to organize recruiting for this object. It was practically a failure: but of the ultimate success of well-conducted effort in this direction there can be no doubt. The Central Provinces offer an abundance of waste land, but experiments in settling Biharis there have not hitherto been attended with success. The Local Government are in treaty with the Chief Commissioner of Assam, in view of ascertaining the capabilities of that rising province to support an additional population. There is already a flourishing colony of Santhals in the Eastern Duars, and the area of cultivable waste in the Assam Valley is practically untouched. It amounts to nearly nine millions of acres: and this, wrote the present Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal in his Administration Report for 1881-82, as Chief Commissioner of Assam, not overgrown with dense forests, but good, flat, alluvial soil, covered only with grass and reeds, which require nothing but the sickle and the match to turn them into excellent manure; while the abundance of bamboo and cane make the building of a comfortable hut, the work of a few days. Everything points to the necessity of State-aided emigration on a considerable scale from Bihár to Burma and Assam.

The volume of colonial emigration from Bihár is temporarily on the decline—a fact accounted for by the fluctuations in demand from the West Indian islands, and want of energy in the recruiting staff. Only 2,292 Biharis sailed in 1891-92, three-fourths of them, strange to say, from South Bihár. Registered emigration to the tea districts is also insignificant; but there is a considerable flow of free labour towards Assam. An annual exodus of small cultivators and labourers takes place to eastern districts of Bengal in search of work on roads and tank excavation. A great shrinkage in the number of these temporary emigrants was observable in 1891-92, when the northern districts of Bengal suffered equally with Bihár from the failure of crops.

F. H. Skrine.

I.

Mileage of roads in the several Divisions of Bengal 1891.

1	2			3
Division.	Number of miles of—			Number of square miles of area to a mile of road.
	Metalled roads.	Unmetalled roads.	Total.	
1. Chittagong ...	11	1,311	1,322	9·16
2. Dacca ...	170	887	1,057	14·25
3. Rajshahi ...	204	4,643	4,847	3·58
4. Presidency ...	526	3,569	4,095	2·95
5. Burdwan ...	1,154	1,822	2,976	4·71
6. Chota Nagpur ...	569	2,230	2,799	9·33
7. Orissa ...	401	960	1,361	7·25
8. Bhagalpur ...	408	4,812	5,220	3·92
9. Patna ...	780	8,122	8,902	2·66
Total for Bengal...	4,223	28,356	32,579	6·33

II

Average produce of the principal crops during the three years ending 1891-92.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Crops.	Chittagong.	Dacca	Rajshahi.	Presidency.	Burdwan.	Chota Nagpur.	Orissa.	Bhagalpur.	Patna.	Remarks.
1. Wheat ...	...	...	64	56	62	54	...	62	62	100 represents a full crop.
2. Pulses ...	69	56	70	63	62	68	62	56	69	
3. Early rice ...	...	73	75	59	75	81	81	...	...	
4 Winter rice ...	88	79	75	64	81	87	75	75	70	
5. Sugarcane ...	81	68	69	...	81	75	68	81	69	
6. Jute ...	69	68	81	87	...	...	...	...	...	
7. Rabi or cold-weather crops.	94	62	75	57	69	56	60	81	59	

III.

Average prices of food-grains (pounds Avoirdupois per rupee) in Bengal, 1889-90 *to* 1891-92.

1	2			3			4			5			6			7			8			9			10		
	Chittagong.			Dacca.			Rajshahi.			Presidency.			Burdwan.			Chota Nagpur.			Orissa.			Bhagalpur.			Patna.		
Food-grains.	1889-90.	1890-91.	1891-92.	1889-90.	1890-91.	1891-92.	1889-90.	1890-91.	1891-92.	1889-90.	1890-91.	1891-92.	1889-90.	1890-91.	1891-92.	1889-90.	1890-91.	1891-92.	1889-90.	1890-91.	1891-92.	1889-90.	1890-91.	1891-92.	1889-90.	1890-91.	1891-92.
1. Wheat	26	24	19	26	26	28	29	27	23	28	26	24	21	19	18	28	29	26	24	25	22	32	30	25	29	27	25
2. Rice ...	32	34	24	28	32	28	32	30	24	30	30	26	34	33	30	35	34	31	41	41	30	36	34	24	34	31	24
3. Pulse...	23	26	20	28	28	30	28	30	28	34	30	30	32	33	30	32	32	42	27	31	30	37	35	33	44	35	36

IV.

Average return per acre in pounds Avoirdupois of the principal crops in Bengal Divisions.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
DESCRIPTION OF CROP.	Chittagong.	Dacca.	Rajshahi.	Presidency.	Burdwan.	Chota Nagpur.	Orissa.	Bhagalpur.	Patna.
1. Rice irrigated ...	984	1,011	1,084	1,090	1,131	512	902	984	1,960
2. „ unirrigated	.. ...	.....	.. ...	.....	.....	.....	1,045	.....	1,392
3. Wheat ...	.....	.....	861	861	.....	451	.....	984	1,387
4. Indigo ..	.....	.....	12	12	12	.....	.....	18	20
5. Jute ...	.....	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	750	.....	1,500	.....
6. Tea ...	288	.....	398	.. ..	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
7. Tobacco ...	656	633	1,457	922	.....	287	.....	844	1,148
8. Opium ...	.....	.....	.. ...	.....	.....	.....	.....	14	14

V.

Incidence of taxation on land (revenue and cesses), 1891-92:

1	2		3			4	
DIVISION.	NUMBER OF—		CURRENT DEMAND.			INCIDENCE OF TAXATION ON LAND.	
	Permanently-settled estates.	Tenures.	Revenue.	Cesses.	Total.	Per head.	Per acre.
			Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.
1. Chittagong ...	32,119	102,789	26,01,808	5,41,937	31,43,745	0 12 5	0 11 8
2. Dacca ...	24,142	33,781	34,43,304	9,48,687	43,91,991	0 7 3	0 7 7
3. Rajshahi ...	5,286	16,716	49,05,564	10,39,519	59,45,071	0 11 9	0 8 1
4. Presidency ...	9,281	59,328	50,74,322	7,74,356	58,48,678	0 11 6	0 12 2
5. Burdwan ...	13,075	151,360	82,18,226	10,96,805	93,15,031	0 14 9	0 15 10
6. Chota Nagpur ...	143	2,158	3,78,322	3,02,401	6,80,723	0 2 4	0 0 8
7. Orissa ...	174	31,535	18,91,658	2,87,188	21,78,846	0 9 2	0 6 6
8. Bhagalpur ...	14,107	28,923	33,08,011	4,17,098	37,25,109	0 7 1	0 4 11
9. Patna ...	5,818	139,574	81,73,958	25,38,269	1,07,12,227	0 10 10	0 11 8
Total for Bengal ...	104,095	569,164	3,79,95,163	79,46,268	4,59,41,421	0 9 9	0 8 9

VI.

The incidence of the Income-Tax, Bengal, 1891-92.

1	2	3	4	5
DIVISION.	Current demand with penalties.	Number of assessees.	Demand per assessee.	Proportion of assessees to population, *i.e.*, one in
	Rs.		Rs. A. P.	
1. Chittagong ...	91,160	5,129	17 12 4	816
2. Dacca	2,83,307	10,677	28 8 0	922
3. Rajshahi	2,90,759	12,472	23 5 0	645
4. Presidency (excluding Calcutta).	2,56,067	12,634	20 4 3	675
5. Calcutta	18,05,820	21,902	82 11 3	31
6. Burdwan	1,95,177	8,896	21 15 0	864
7. Chota Nagpur ...	94,805	4,311	21 5 10	1,073
8. Orissa	51,413	2,576	19 15 4	1,570
9. Bhagalpur ...	2,31,442	10,607	21 13 1	809
10. Patna	3,83,449	13,972	27 7 1	1,131
Total ...	36,83,399	103,176	28 8 0(*a*)	853(*a*)

(*a*) Average incidence for Bengal

VII.

The extent of cultivation in Bengal, 1891-92.

1.	2			3	4
Division.	Area in standard acres.			Percentage of cultivated area to total.	Remarks.
	Cultivated.	Uncultivated.	Total.		
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.		
1. Chittagong ...	2,825,983	4,929,537	7,755,520	36 43	Thus out of 153,079 square miles, 86,754 are cultivated, and 66·325 are, uncultivated.
2. Dacca ...	5,782,398	3,845,122	9,627,520	60·06	
3. Rajshahi ...	7,030,560	4,086,880	11,117,440	63·23	
4. Presidency ...	5,457,557	4,322,865	9,780,422	55·80	
5. Burdwan ...	5,170,006	3,757,354	8,927,360	57·91	
6. Chota Nagpur ...	6,925,329	10,332,211	17,257,540	40·12	
7. Orissa ...	3,056,935	2,165,465	5,222,400	58·53	
8. Bhagalpur ...	8,154,371	4,973,949	13,128,320	62·11	
9. Patna ...	11,119,911	4,034,649	15,154,560	73 37	
Total ...	55,523,050	42,448,032	97,971,082	56·67	

VIII.

Population of Bengal, 1881 *and* 1891.

1.	2	3			4	5
Division.	Area in square miles.	Population by census returns.			Percentage of increase, 1891.	Persons per square mile, 1891.
		1881.	1891.	Increase, 1891.		
1. Chittagong ...	12,118	3,574,048	4,190,081	616,033	17·2	345
2 Dacca ...	15,045	8,700,939	9,844,127	1,143,188	13·1	654
3. Rajshahi ...	17,351	7,733,775	8,019,187	285,412	3·7	462
4. Presidency ...	12,068	8,204,912	8,535,126	330,214	4·0	707
5. Burdwan ...	13,956	7,393,954	7,688,818	294,864	3 9	551
6. Chota Nagpur ...	26,966	4,225,989	6,628,792	402,803	9·5	171
7. Orissa ...	9,853	3,730,735	4,047,352	316,617	8·4	410
8. Bhagalpur ...	20,511	8,063,160	8,582,490	519,330	6·4	418
9. Patna ...	23,675	15,063,944	15,811,014	747,070	4·9	667
Total ...	151,543	66,691,456	71,346,987	4,655,531	7·9	487

IX.

Comparative statement showing Schools and Scholars in Bengal, 1881-82 *and* 1891-92.

1	2													3												4	5	
	1881-82.													1891-92.												Proportion of schools to area one to—		Proportion of scholars to boys of school-going age, one to—
	Number of Schools of all classes.							Number of Pupils under instruction in Schools.						Number of Schools of all classes.							Number of Pupils under instruction in Schools.									
Division.	High.	Middle English.	Middle vernacular.	Primary, upper and lower.	Girls.	Miscellaneous.	Total.	High.	Middle English.	Middle vernacular.	Primary, upper and lower.	Girls.	Miscellaneous.	Total.	High.	Middle English.	Middle vernacular.	Primary, upper and lower.	Girls.	Miscellaneous.	Total.	High.	Middle English.	Middle vernacular.	Primary, upper and lower.	Girls.	Miscellaneous.	Total.	Square miles, 1881-82.	Square miles, 1891-92.	1881-82.	1891-92.
1. Chittagong ...	7	27	65	366	183	3,313	3,961	455	2,122	4,004	12,960	2,101	46,412	69,810	16	71	424	5,669	603	977	7,460	3,357	4,844	5,706	130,176	8,634	2,892	155,661	3·06	1·62	5	2
2. Dacca ...	20	109	231	3,755	213	1,463	5,791	5,389	8,735	12,668	90,722	3,413	28,864	149,561	42	174	270	7,372	650	17	8,525	10,379	13,488	12,963	170,486	10,401	993	218,710	2·59	1·76	6	4
3. Rajshahi ...	14	57	148	1,851	34	18	2,122	2,287	3,006	6,609	49,406	765	463	63,156	19	85	136	3,031	99	347	3,617	3,787	5,846	7,092	78,256	1,630	3,393	100,204	8·17	4·79	12	8
4. Presidency ...	54	74	149	859	192	326	1,654	...	5,690	9,971	43,209	4,807	9,360	73,037	78	141	216	5,121	321	119	5,996	12,718	10,004	12,644	144,054	8,119	1,216	188,755	7·29	2·01	10	4
5. Burdwan ...	55	89	140	1,751	91	8,273	10,398	406	4,292	8,362	40,979	2,075	174,370	230,484	84	208	174	10,070	286	93	10,915	14,392	13,353	10,451	224,804	6,143	1,357	270,000	1·34	1·28	3	3·5
6. Chota Nagpur	7	12	29	954	14	143	1,519	451	302	1,439	11,292	308	....	13,852	7	23	52	1,947	124	30	2,163	1,184	1,800	1,948	55,263	3,302	247	63,804	23·26	12·46	30	7
7. Orissa	6	23	35	7,770	33	168	8,035	833	1,411	1,233	90,163	899	1,743	96,281	9	39	46	7,057	95	30	7,276	1,417	2,229	1,979	107,733	2,479	346	116,183	1·22	1·35	4	3
8. Bhagalpur ...	8	33	65	7,504	29	119	7,757	1,580	1,344	2,812	81,813	396	1,458	89,403	16	36	40	3,205	118	7	3,422	3,254	2,115	2,316	69,715	2,397	212	80,009	2·60	5·99	9	10
9. Patna	16	35	113	2,195	9	863	3,236	562	2,512	6,462	40,473	254	10,171	60,374	38	45	60	6,229	226	7	6,605	9,130	7,980	3,247	142,088	3,801	1,086	167,232	7·31	3·59	25	9
Total for Bengal ..	187	459	998	27,086	788	14,684	44,113	11,893	30,010	53,576	460,706	15,163	274,646	845,998	310	822	1,093	49,701	2,522	1,529	55,982	59,618	61,859	57,998	1,122,575	47,186	11,642	1,360,358	6·31	3·87	11·6	5·5

X

Mortality in the Divisions of Bengal, 1881 *and* 1891.

Division.	Ratio of deaths per mille of the population from—											
	Cholera.				Fevers.				All causes.			
	1881	1891	Increase.	Decrease.	1881.	1891.	Increase.	Decrease.	1881.	1891.	Increase.	Decrease.
1. Chittagong ...	·31	1·22	·91	...	11·61	15·92	4·31	...	15·25	20·36	5·11	...
2. Dacca ...	·90	3·01	2·11	...	9 58	14·75	5·17	...	13·16	22·06	8·90	....
3. Rajshahi ...	1·20	5·60	4 40	...	16·83	27·38	10·55	...	19 45	35·44	15·99	...
4. Presidency ...	2·34	4·48	2 14	...	23·18	26·12	2 94	...	28·29	33 80	5 51	...
5. Burdwan ...	1·28	2 08	·80	...	19·52	18 19	...	1·33	24·96	26·81	1·85	...
6. Chota Nagpur ...	·13	1·02	·89	...	12·65	15·93	3 28	...	16·28	23·01	6·73	...
7. Orissa ...	3·06	1·66	...	1·40	7·91	9·92	2 01	...	22·69	24 29	1·60	...
8. Bhagalpur ...	·47	4·43	3 96	...	13·60	22·02	8 42	...	15 46	29·25	13·79	...
9. Patna ...	1 18	3 13	1·95	...	11 55	16·28	5·03	...	17·03	24 25	7·54	...
Bengal ...	1·19	3 26	2·07	...	14·23	18·94	4·71	...	18 99	26·94	7·95	...

XI.

Incidence of Revenue from Excise, 1881-82 *and* 1891-92.

1	2								3								4	
Division.	Revenue in 1881-82, from—								Revenue in 1891-92, from—								Incidence per head of the population.	
	Country spirits.	Imported spirits.	Pachwai.	Tari.	Opium.	Ganja.	Miscellaneous.	Total.	Country spirits.	Imported spirits.	Pachwai.	Tari.	Opium.	Ganja.	Miscellaneous.	Total.	1881-82.	1891-92.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.
1. Chittagong	39,723	2,717	1,593	4,570	94,194	63,195	7,054	2,13,050	34,084	5,990	1,605	5,319	1,24,222	79,559	4,989	2,55,798	0 0 11	0 1 0
2. Dacca	1,82,805	18,584	4,924	14,832	1,00,473	3,28,082	16,283	6,65,980	2,05,173	37,007	6,497	3,099	1,20,001	4,33,935	12,811	8,19,122	0 0 10	0 1 3
3. Rajshahi	1,61,564	11,733	2,412	2,969	2,20,630	1,58,963	15,301	5,90,291	3,67,211	23,067	26,636	6,785	2,28,291	2,24,786	13,685	8,87,451	0 1 11	0 2 11
4. Presidency	13,11,286	1,29,923	12,066	96,250	5,43,670	2,96,225	1,70,088	24,58,408	13,93,246	1,52,866	23,098	1,62,651	6,71,929	4,18,697	3,03,436	31,16,723	0 4 11	0 10 3
5. Burdwan	3,50,670	11,199	1,12,335	32,396	2,90,289	89,329	23,279	9,09,478	3,33,233	10,426	1,98,107	70,496	3,51,936	1,42,561	21,678	11,33,437	0 2 5	0 2 6
6. Chota Nagpur ...	4,31,740	800	5,907	5,743	28,548	41,055	3,089	5,17,182	6,22,863	1,817	12,945	6,541	52,619	64,346	4,903	7,66,039	0 1 11	0 2 5
7. Orissa	46,338	354	2	26,633	3,16,039	62,648	8,006	4,60,025	36,799	1,014	256	38,406	3,83,233	79,892	11,960	5,51,459	0 2 1	0 2 4
8. Bhagalpur	5,68,903	2,579	18,021	78,861	1,28,707	3,37,548	17,997	11,46,006	5,21,419	3,650	34,368	1,12,185	1,51,443	4,09,949	19,339	12,52,353	0 2 3	0 2 5
9. Patna	16,37,161	5,037	.....	4,05,245	14,859	3,36,735	13,047	24,17,984	12,90,511	7,207	63	5,54,923	35,153	4,38,613	20,889	23,47,429	0 2 9	0 2 6
Total ...	46,24,189	1,83,812	1,64,265	6,66,194	17,47,609	17,13,791	2,78,144	93,78,004	48,14,643	2,23,644	3,04,165	9,57,405	21,18,825	22,92,568	4,18,560	1,11,29,810	0 2 3	0 3 0

H. P. & E. D'S —Reg. No. 6236C—350—23-12-92.